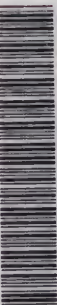


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FAMILIAR EPISTLES

TO

FREDERICK E. JONES, ESQ.

ON THE

PRESENT STATE

OF THE

IRISH STAGE.

FIFTH EDITION.

Vererer ne immodicam hanc epistolam putares, nisi esset generis ejus, ut sæpe incipere, sæpe desinere videatur: nam singulis criminibus, singulæ velut causæ continentur.

PLIN. EPIST. AD MACRIN.

Facendo professione di candida verità parlerò senz' amore e senz' odio di ciascheduno.

DAVANZ. STOR. ROM.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY GRAISBERRY AND CAMPBELL,
NO. 10, BACK-LANE,

And sold by all the Booksellers.

1806.

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I SHOULD be almost ashamed to dedicate the following trifle to any one; but if the subject and execution were of more importance, and greater excellence, I should not hesitate to inscribe it to HIM, in whose family, even the titles of his nobility have been less hereditary, than the learning and the taste of the scholar and the gentleman, to—LORD HARDWICKE.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

JANUARY, 1804.



THE following letters are the hasty* effusions of my holy-day leisure, and originally aspired to no higher rank in the literary world, than a place in the public papers; but, after some trials, I found, that the Dublin Editors and Mr. Jones had sworn an inviolable friendship; and, that no essay, in which his name was mentioned, would be inserted "sans son aveu."—

I really have no very exalted opinion of the merit of my verses; I know them "*tenui esse oratione et scripturâ levi,*" yet I am vain enough to hope, that they may be worth a few shillings,
(were

* The verse was written within as many days as there are letters: *this* is no excuse for their incorrectness, but the kind of publication, for which they were intended, is.—Besides, my avocations do not allow me leisure for revision; he, therefore, who cannot forgive harsh metre, and rambling meaning, had better read no further—if he does, let him not then blame me; he has had fair warning.

(were it only to laugh at,) and therefore I present them to those, who have shillings to throw away, in the only shape in which it is, in Ireland, possible to publish them.

To my readers I can only promise, that, though they may not be much amused by my rhymes, they shall, at least, be exercised in some of the moral virtues; for, besides the generosity of giving the poor bookseller two or three shillings, for what is, perhaps, not worth a farthing, they will also have to applaud themselves for much patience and long suffering;—and, as a specimen, I beg leave to detain them, while I give some account of the occasion and object of a work, which they, perhaps, have already resolved never to read.

The management of a private theatre, the temple of the folly, or, as some have said, of the vice of a few individuals, who had more money than wit,* and more leisure than either, was the first dramatic exertion of our present Patentee, and it is said that he acquitted himself most meritoriously in this important office; so resplendent, at least, were his ministerial talents, in the eyes of the judicious subscribers to this puppet-show, that they were easily led to believe that no other person was half so well qualified to be the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the kingdom.

They

* Some of them, to do them justice, were less deficient in wit than in sense.

They therefore zealously laboured to procure for Mr. Jones, the reversion of the Patent, which Daly then held, or, at least, a licence to open a second Theatre in Dublin. The Lord Lieutenant was soon subdued into something like a promise, and Daly, to save himself from the threatening storm, was obliged to make terms with, and abdicate his throne in favour of, the conquering Jones.

This, it must be confessed, was, to the Public, a matter of much satisfaction. Daly had long since, either by his negligence or incapacity, dissatisfied the Citizens of Dublin, and the elegant and liberal taste of the new Proprietor was every where extolled, by some who knew him, and by many more who did not; and thus, with a pretty general approbation, he obtained a despotic monopoly of the Theatres Royal of *Cork*, *Limerick* and *Dublin*.

What the annual profits of this monopoly may be, it is impossible for *me* to assert; but I have heard them estimated, by *well-informed* persons, at a sum* greater than the salary of two of the judges of the land!!!

I am always pleased at the honest good fortune of any man, and therefore I rejoice at Mr. Jones's most extraordinary success; but then, I should
hope,

* More than £.5000 per annum—and I have reason to think that I have considerably under-rated Mr. Jones's theatrical income.

hope, it were not unreasonable to expect, that the single company, to which the whole dramatic expence of a generous people is tributary, should, in return for such exclusive patronage, display all the variety and excellence of which such an establishment is capable.

Whether it is so conducted,—what has been done towards encouraging humble merit, and securing the *permanent* assistance of acknowledged abilities,—and, generally, the present state of the *theatrical* amusements of the Capital, are the principal objects of the following enquiry.

If we were to submit *our* judgment to that of the public papers, the cause would soon be decided:—Those impartial Chronicles will assure us, that, so far from deserving censure, the conduct of the Theatre,—the selection of Performances,—and the choice and abilities of the Actors,* are all intitled to the most implicit and unqualified approbation.

But, whatever respect we may have for the opinions of some of the very ingenious persons who act as the Editors of newspapers, we are not bound to give the slightest credence to those *dramatic criticisms*,

* The Lord Polonius was a very niggard of commendation, *au prix* of these journals. “The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene undividable, or poem unlimited.”——*Hamlet*.

criticisms, which every journalist so plentifully admits into his columns; and for the truth of which venal* advertisements, and paid-for puffs,† he is, in fact, no more responsible, than for the cheapness and excellence of each article in Twigg's repository, or Percy's auction-rooms.

We cannot justly blame them for inserting whatever they are paid to insert—'tis their trade, and

a 3

even

* Falsaffe was desirous of knowing "where a commodity of good names were to be bought;" poor Sir John! did he live in our time, he might easily buy courage, honour and generosity, temperance, soberness and chastity, for less than a gallon of sack. So generally indeed are "omnia venalia," that I am not surprised that Mr. Jones's sagacious defenders have been pleased to assert, that *I* am an hired scribbler. If this were true, should I not at least have earned my salary better than they?—I confess, however, that if I cared for such reputation as the world now a days bestows, I should follow the example of Stesichorus, and never write of a living creature; πεφύλαξαι μὲν οὖν, says Phalaris to him, γράφειν εἰς τὰς κατὰ σεαυτοῦ ἀνθρώπους ἵνα μὴ δοξῇ σὺ τίς ἀνίαν εἶναι τὴν ποιήσιν.

† Will it be credited, that our Irish puffs (shameless as they were) rather stimulated than allayed the "sacra fames" with which our actors, &c. are infected; and that a *puffer* by profession has been imported from England, for their gratification. Of this person's talents I know nothing, but by his works in the Dublin papers: and of them it is but just to say, that, although they labour under the disadvantage of being composed of words *ill-chosen, ill-spelled, and ungrammatically arranged*; they do, nevertheless, display a lavish audacity of flattery and falsehood, which would have cloyed the stomach of Erisichthon himself; but as for the gentlemen of the theatre,

———Inattenuata manebit
Nunc quoq; dira fames, inplacataq; vigebit
Flamma gulæ.

METAM. VIII.

even their duty: as well might we complain of their representing a horse as sound, or a post-chaise as good as new, when, in truth, the steed is foundered, and the carriage in pieces.—God forbid that I should expect from newspapers, nothing but plain sense and honest truth—I am not so unreasonable.

Ecrive donc qui voudra, chacun à ce métier,
Peut perdre impunément de l'encre et du papier.

But, whilst we read these effusions, let us always recollect, that it is the *actor* that gravely descants on *his own* spirited performance, or the *fiddler** that

* A whimsical instance of this “*ἠροῦ χαλχός*,” this *musical brass*, occurs to me, and I shall give it as a specimen: in one of the later papers, (I believe, the Freeman’s Journal,) an admirable piece of theatrical criticism, replete with Horatian judgment, and Addisonian graces, concluded its account of the musical performance with this elegant idea, “and though there are *two Cookes* in the orchestra, we cannot say that they *spoil the broth!!!*” This is *very kitchenstuff*!

The Freeman’s Journal is, as it would seem, angry, but not abashed, at the gentle correction I inflicted; the following judgment, concerning this poem and its supposed Author, is another fair specimen of its Horatian judgments, and Addisonian graces:

“A shabby *Barrister*, who never could acquire as much by legal ability as would powder his wig, has resorted to the expedient of “*raising the wind*,” by a familiar epistle, assassinating male and female reputation. The *infamous* production has had some sale, as will ever what is replete with *scurrility*, *obscenity*, and *falsehood*; but this high-flying pedant, of empty bag fame in his profession, will shortly find, that *peeping TOM* will be dragged forth to public view, in a *very familiar* manner.”

So,

that modestly extols the brilliancy of *his own* taste, and the skill of *his own* execution!!!

Thus much I think it necessary to say, in my own defence, for rejecting, *as I altogether do*, the evidence of the newspapers, on the subject under consideration.

Let me now say a few words on the style and matter of these Epistles:

Were that an *easy style* which is easily written,* I should have no paternal fears for the success of this

So, Reader, YOU are convicted of having purchased and perused this *infamous* catch-penny, because you take pleasure in *scurrility, obscenity, and falsehood*. Upon my word, Sir or Madam, either *you* are a very *wicked* person, or the Freeman's Journal is grossly erroneous.—‘L'Alternatif (as Gil Blas says) est convaincant.’

* “It is a curious illustration,” says the *Editor* of Mr. Little's poems, “of the labour which simplicity requires, that the *Ramblers*, elaborate as they appear, were written with fluency, and seldom required revision; while the simple language of *Rousseau*, which seems to come flowing from the heart, was the slow production of painful labour, pausing on every word, and balancing every sentence.” The verse of Mr. Little himself, easy and light as it seems, is said to have been wrought with very much of the “*limæ labor et mora*.” I could wish his sentiments were but half as correct as his versification; but the only *Venus* he worships is she, whom the scholiast on *Aristophanes* calls Γενετυλλίς; and, what is worse, he makes all the young people in the empire worship her too. I recommend to Mr. Little's consideration, (for I am told he is still

this little Book. We, subalterns of poetry, should soon become the field officers, and no one, who had the insolence to take any pains with his appearance, would be permitted to show himself on the parade of a bookseller's counter; but, unhappily, this regulation has not yet taken place, and an ill-judging world still throws in our teeth,

You write with ease, to show your breeding,
But *easy* writing 's damn'd *hard* reading.

On this topic, then, gentle Reader, I have only to refer you to my title-page, in which you will find my gracious permission to throw down my book, whenever it shall tire you, and take it up again, when you have nothing else to do.

And now of the *matter*;—

No one, I believe, will say, that, professing to treat of plays and play-houses, I should, or indeed *could* have refrained from mentioning the players, unless he be such a casuist as Mr. Shandy, who, being bound by his marriage articles to keep a coach, asserted, that he was not thereby obliged
to

still alive, and still an Author,) the precept of one of the best poets the modern world has produced:

Un auteur vertueux dans ses vers innocens
Ne *corrompt* point le cœur, en *chatouillant* les sens:
Son feu n'allume point de *criminelle* flame.
Aimez donc la vertu, nourrissez-en votre ame;
En vain l'esprit est plein d'un noble v'gueur,
Le vers se sent toujours des bassesses du cœur.

to provide horses to draw it—what horses are to a coach, actors are, I humbly conceive, to a theatre; and this, I imagine, will be a sufficient apology for the freedom I take, in considering their merits and imperfections. I hope I shall not be found a very ill-natured censor—I have studiously avoided all severe allusions to *private* character, and have rather inclined to the *equity of mercy, than to the rigour of satire; but

Si quis est, qui dictum in se inclementius

Existimat esse, sic existimet—

Responsum non *ita* dictum

that it has not been said with an intention to offend, but, because *truth* “lay in my way, and I found it.”

Every other person that I have alluded to, is, also, *publici juris*, either from his station or character, and will be so good as to remember, that a liberty to praise or censure, is a privilege, which an inhabitant of a free country always exacts from *notoriety*.

One word more to the Patentee, and I have done:

Let me assure him, that so far from having any hostile intentions towards him, I think him, a pleasant companion, and an honourable gentleman,

* Quando pudiere, y deviere tener lugar la *equidad*, no cargues todo il rigor de la *satyrà* al delinquente.—Cervant.

*gentleman, and I dare say he will easily perceive; that my advice and criticism are not those of an enemy. His management of the Theatre has been, in many instances, extremely injudicious: the total want of great, the small number of respectable, and the dismal herd of indifferent actors, are evident and inexcusable—the choice of plays is frequently of an indiscrimination, only to be equalled by that of the cast of the characters, and a total inattention to the production of Irish abilities, either active or graphic, is a source of concern to every friend of the drama, of literature, and of Ireland.

But

* Whilst the second Edition was preparing for the press, Mr. Jones sent for my Printer, who attended him without consulting me. ‘Sir,’ said the Manager, ‘you may publish Critiques on the Theatre every day, but I would advise you to take care, for if *we can lay hold of any thing, we shall not easily relinquish it*; as for the Author, he is now in England, but when he comes back *we will take that notice of him he justly merits*.’ This was, in part at least, true; not only Mr. Jones, but the whole kingdom, have *taken notice* of me, and more, I am ready to own, than I *justly merit*, “τὸ δὲ παν καλὸν ἐς μέγαλαρῶται,” most undeservedly indeed. Of Mr. Jones’s notice, I shall, at all times, be proud and happy to be the object; and shall, to the best of my abilities, endeavour to convince him of my cordial gratitude.

Qui me commôrit, melius non tangere clamo,
Flebit, et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.

Or as Pope admirably translates it.

Whoe’er offends, at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse and hitches in a rhyme,
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burden of some merry song.

But against these errors and omissions, much propriety* and decency† of regulation, much splendor of decoration,‡ much punctuality with those in his employment, and much profession of readiness to adopt good advice, are to be balanced—

* Hear the opinion of “les blessés” on this and similar passages :

“ The *furious* invective that pervades the Familiar Epistles is of the most acrid quality ; *abuse* is substituted for argument, and indeed for every thing, nor is there *throughout* this patch-work and piebald production, *any* ingredient of good nature to qualify, soften, justify or correct its *SUPERCILIOUS and wanton attacks.*” FREEMAN’S JOURNAL, 14th Feb. 1804.

The *language* of this sentence is of an extraordinary selection and texture, “ sed ubi plura nitent non ego paucis offendar maculis.”—

† Much however remains to be done, though indeed it is difficult to say how it is to be accomplished, or by what means the Theatre can be kept sacred from the libertinism and drunkenness, which now so often invade it, under the very eyes of our wives and daughters.

Spectant hæc nuptæ, juxta recubante marito

Quod pudeat narrasse aliquem præsentibus ipsis. Juv.

The Grecian theatres, says Lactantius (l. 6.) were dedicated to *Bacchus* and *Venus*; if some exertion is not made by the well disposed part of the community, *ours* will soon become so too, and not metaphorically. I know that Mr. Jones, on this subject, thinks as I do, and I hope he will devise some means of preventing the *growth* of so tremendous an evil.

‡ “ Aurea quæ pendent ornato signa theatro,” but would I rather, were I obliged to make an election, have good actors and indifferent scenery, than fine scenery and miserable strollers, “ Tom Errands dressed in Clincher’s clothes.”

lanced—wishing, therefore, that henceforward there may be larger opportunities for commendation, and less necessity for censure; and, above all, exhorting him to be thankful for the *lenity* and good-humour with which I have hitherto borne (what nobody else can bear) his vituperation of me and his praises of himself and his theatres, I shall make my parting compliment to him in the words of a monarch of Antiquity,* οὐδὲν ἄχαρι βέλομαι

* I earnestly beg Mr. Jones's attention to the *latter* part of this sentence—I hope I need not translate it for *his* use, though I am informed it has puzzled a *Parson*. In one of the late Dublin Journals, there appeared an entertaining, and not ill-written account of the dismay and confusion into which a country gentleman, his two daughters, and the Rector of the Parish, were thrown by my “ostentatious parade of study”—and, “*fatebor enim*,” the topic was handled humourously enough, The author, whoever he be, is a fellow of some fun, but he must give me leave to suspect, that he is not quite so ignorant and illiterate as he would have us believe.

On the subject of quotations, my opinions are, however, unchanged and unchangeable.

Quia Graiorum sunt antiquissima quæq;

Scripta vel optima—Romani pensantur eâdem.

Scriptores trutinâ.

The delight which I have all my life received from the lecture of the Classics, as they are called, may have had too powerful an effect on my gratitude, and may have led me into some of the errors of pedantry. I am sorry for it, but really I cannot consent to give up those venerable and valuable acquaintances, whose company has hitherto been my greatest solace, and satisfaction, merely because there happen to be men in the world who never went to school, and women and Parsons who can't read Greek. Let me add, in the admirable words

βέλομαι σε παθεῖν ἀπ' ἐμῶ, πλείω γάρ εὐρίσκω σοι τὰ ἀγαθὰ πεπραγμένα τῶν χειρόνων. διὸ καὶ τὰτὸ σε τῶν βελτιόνων ἐν γενέσθω, τὸ μὴ προσαναγκάσαι με, τῷ χαλεπωτέρῳ τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ σὺ χρήσασθαι πάθει.

Φαλ. Εἰς. Νεολαΐδα.

words of James I. at seeing the Bodleian Library, "Si unquam mihi in fatis sit, ut captivus ducar, si mihi daretur optio, hoc cuperem carcere concludi, his catenis illigari, cum hisce captivis concatenatis ætatem agere."

BURT. A. M.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general
survey of the history of the world, from the
beginning of time to the present day. The author
treats of the various ages of the world, and
of the different nations and empires which
have existed upon the face of the globe. He
then proceeds to a more particular account of
the history of the Christian world, and of the
different sects and churches which have arisen
since the time of the apostles.

The second part of the book is devoted to a
particular account of the history of the
Christian world, and of the different sects and
churches which have arisen since the time of
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different ages of the world, and of the
different nations and empires which have
existed upon the face of the globe. He then
proceeds to a more particular account of the
history of the Christian world, and of the
different sects and churches which have arisen
since the time of the apostles.

ADDITIONAL PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

MARCH, 1804.



Νῦν δ' ἄτ' ἐξερῶ ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἀρίστα.

THE Printer informs me, that he is about to prepare a New Edition of the Familiar Epistles for the Press, and I eagerly seize the opportunity of returning my thanks to the great majority of the Public for its generous applause, and to a very small minority for its no less gratifying and complimentary disapprobation.

Though my vanity is not so great, as to induce me to enrich this Edition with the kind and angry **Testimonia* OBSCURORUM *virorum*," which I have had the happiness to see and hear, yet I must take leave to say, that if ignorance and ill manners had not been so obliging as to revile my little work, I should have considered its reputation as precarious, and its triumph as incomplete.

—Me manus omnis habet—

Ecce rubet quidam, pallet, stupet, oscitat, *odit*.

Hoc volo—*nunc nobis* nostra sarmina placent.

* They were, however, annexed to the 4th Edition, and are to this, in order to preserve them from utter oblivion.

This

This self satisfaction was the only reward of which I was ambitious, and I obtained it. But what apologies can I make to those hapless gentlemen who have laboured under my suppositious fame? Poor creatures! I should have been inclined to lament their distresses, had not their *affected modesty* made them so strangely ridiculous. Their solemn asseverations of innocence, do indeed, remind me of a story told by Lord Orford of Lord William Paulet: A political pamphlet having excited a good deal of notice, some wag chose to father it on Lord William, who was by no means remarkable for his literary attainments; this report induced a gentleman who thought himself aggrieved by the publication, to request that his Lordship would *explain*—Lord William willingly professed ignorance and innocence, and began to write a denial of his authorship in this manner:—
 “ *This is to scratify that the buk caled the snak*”—
 “ Oh,” interrupted the offended person, “ your Lordship need not add another word; I am as perfectly satisfied as if you had made* *affidavit* that you were not the author.”

March 6, 1804.

FEBRUARY,

* We have heard, and we do believe, that a Barrister, to whom (in jest we suppose) these letters were attributed, did solemnly swear before a master in Chancery, and as solemnly recite in the green-room before the players, an affidavit, “ *scratifying that the buk caled*” the Familiar Epistles was not written by him !!!

N. B. The gentleman’s testimony remains unimpeached!
 “ *Semperq; manebit!*”

FEBRUARY, 1805.

DISJECTA MEMBRA POETÆ.

To enable the world at last to ascertain who I am, I have with great diligence extracted from several deceased publications, the following sketches of my portrait, which when reconciled together, will, I dare swear, make a most striking likeness.

Tea Table Conversation. He is ridiculously low,
p. 9.

Thespiad. He is ridiculously tall, p. 30.

Tea Table Conversation. He is not young, p. 34.

Reflections. He is very young, p. 13.

Freeman's Journal. He is an infamous scribbler,
passim.

Reflections. He is a well educated gentleman,
p. 15.

Thespiad. He has erudition, p. 3.

Answer to the Familiar Epistles. He has no erudition, p. 7.

Thespiad. His verses are execrable, p. 3.

Tea Table Conversation. His verses are good, p.
37.

Answer to the Familiar Epistles. He is a skulking
assassin, p. 11.

Reflections. He is a great man, p. 61.

Tea

Tea Table Conversation. He is a monkey, p. 26, and a manx poney, p. 33, and a beau, p. 27, and a lawyer, p. 30, and a tavern waiter, p. 27, and a dancing master, p. 9, and a trout stream, p. 32.

Thespiad. He is a dragon, p. 11, and a badger, p. 32, and a goose, p. 30, and a snake, p. 30, and a writer of plays, p. 4, and a country squire, p. 1, and Sancho Panza, p. 22, and Judas Iscariot, p. 35.

Theatrical Tears. His name is Ball, p. 3.

Tea Table Conversation. His name is Croker, *passim*.

Freeman's Journal. His name is *Thomas, *passim*.

Chorus. His name is A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, and so on *al fine*.

For my own part, I join in the *chorus*, though I think all the rest very agreeable and very true.

* Of two of those Gentlemen I have not the least personal knowledge, and of the third I will venture to say, (without meaning any disparagement to his abilities), that *how* he came to be suspected should rather be enquired of his *friends* than of his enemies.

TO
FREDERICK E. JONES, ESQ.

PATENTEE

OF THE
THEATRE-ROYAL.



FIRST EPISTLE.

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi.

HOR. A. P.

JONES,* who direct with equal skill,
The bill of fare, and play-house bill,
Whose taste all other palates sways
Either in dishes, or in plays,
And rightly judges where there should
Come *entremêts* or interlude;——
Whose genius never at a loss is,
Either for farces, or for sauces,

And

* Jones.—To such of my readers as have the misfortune not to belong to Daly's, or be in habits of eating with the *bons vivants* of Dublin, it may be necessary to say, that Mr. Jones understands the regulation of a table at least as well as that of a Theatre; which is not surprising, when we consider how much more the former has employed his thoughts and his time.

And regulates with happiest care
 An epilogue or a *dessert*.——
 You, who with equal judgment sit
 The arbiter of wine and wit,
 By palate and by patent placed
 Upon the *double* throne of taste;
 If you, dear Manager, can spare a
 Moment from Turbot and Madeira,
 You'll find, perhaps, that my Epistle,
 Tho' not so sweet to mouth or whistle,
 And flat, in edible respect,
 Is savoury to the intellect.*

For I would seek the wond'rous cause,
 That abrogates our ancient laws,
 And like the Gallic revolution,
 Subverts old Crow-street's constitution;——
 Thus Shakespeare, *Monarch* of the realm
 Of plays, his subjects overwhelm,
 And mad with rebel fury grown,
 Insult, and sentence, and dethrone;—
 Thus Fletcher, Johnson, Otway, Rowe,
 The *nobles* of the stage, are low,

Are

* Mr. Jones complains, that the foregoing lines contain a cruel attack on his private character; for my part, I cannot perceive any cruelty in saying of a man, that he likes good things; I like good things myself—"If sack and sugar be a crime, heaven help the wicked;"—but I *can* perceive, that these verses seem to contain a kind of *approbation* of Mr. Jones's taste and talents as a manager, which I own to be *unmerited* and *unjustifiable*, and for which I humbly beg pardon of him, and of the world—perhaps even this may not satisfy Mr. Jones,—but there is no pleasing some people.

Or else dispers'd by barbarous arts,
 Are **émigrés* in foreign parts;
 Whilst in their places rise and sit
 The very *tiers-état* of wit;
 And high o'er all, in tragic rage,
 †Kotzebue, chief consul of the stage;
 Of lineage foreign and obscure,
 Of manners harsh, of thought impure;
 Bold, brutal, bloody, and (in few)
 Just like his brother of St. Cloud.

In managers, the stage and state
 Have to lament as hard a fate;
 'Tis no more Barry, or Choiseul,
 Fleuri, or Sheridan, that rule,
 But Talleyrand and Jones appear,
 And Fouché there, and F-ll-m ‡ here.

B

Nor

* Our old English authors, however despised at home, are in high request abroad, and afford, indeed, a very ample fund to the French and German plagiarists.

† Without having any great respect for Kotzebue's moral character, it is but justice to declare, that it is only in his dramatic capacity that I compare him with the worst man of this, or perhaps of any age.

‡ J——s, F-ll-m.—Far be it from me to put those respectable gentlemen in the same rank with the *apostate Talleyrand*, or the *Septembriser Fouché*, in any other than a metaphorical sense; they are the ministers of a *revolutionized stage*; as such I dislike and oppose their administration, but, unlike other oppositionists, may be brought over by a change of measures, without a change of men.—If Mr. Windham reads this note, he will pronounce me an egregious blockhead. (1805.)

Nor groans beneath its tyrants less
 In Erin than in France, the Press;
 Subdued alike in either land,
 By iron rod, or golden wand;——
 As in *romance, some magic sword
 (Gage of their fate) the sorcerers hoard,
 Deep in their cavern's mystic bound,
 While prowling monsters guard it round;——
 ——So lies the Press, (whose powerful charm
 Can nerve the weak, the naked arm,
 Emancipate the captive mind,
 And from *its* dæmons free mankind)
 Dungeon'd in slavery's sightless caves,
 And watched by dunces and by knaves.

Yet we can rail in goodly strains,
 At France's folly, France's chains;
 Whilst our own press, that points the gibe,
 At Bonaparte and all his tribe,
 The tyranny, in silence bears,
 Of players, and of worse than players.

Oh for a muse of fire to light,
 The gloom of Erin's mental night;
 And, from the opening clouds, to shed
 'The rays of freedom round her head;
 'Twere vainly then, that, in defence
 Of want of judgment and of sense,
 Our manager should gravely vow,
 Our stage "*was ne'er so grand as now.*"†

In

* Vide Southey's *Thalaba*.

† "For who than Jones more hospitably lives,

"Or such a generous social banquet gives?

" And

In ward-robe, that it much excels
 Both Drury Lane and Sadler's Wells;
 In orchestra superior far is
 To Naples, and in scenes to Paris;
 That wond'rous actors tread his boards,
 The best that all the world affords,
 And (since we force him to aver it)
 The *whole is BETTER THAN WE MERIT.
 "He owns," he adds, "that ancient plays
 "Are seldom acted now-a-days.
 "And modern critics rather choose
 "An infant than a grandam muse;

B 2

"That

"And sure his theatre, we must allow, . . .

"Was ne'er so managed, *or so grand as now.*"

THESPIAD, p. 5.

Such is the reasoning of the author of the *Thespiad*: I fear, however, that it is what Mr. Partridge would have called a *non sequitur*. I have somewhere met the following lines:

Whenever folks, with gibing low,
 Exclaim, "don't make yourself a *joe*,"
 'Tis understood, by general rule,
 To mean, "don't make yourself a *fool*."

In *this* sense then, and in *this* sense only, I pronounce the writer of the *Thespiad* to be a *most egregious JOE*—he argues, in one of his notes, that I am a *wit*, because I am *half starved*: might I not, with equal justice, deduce from his *gross folly*, that he is *fat* and full fed?—but, to say the truth, I do not care what he is—I abandon him to the criticisms of the *Irish Magazines*—ἀρκεῖ, σοι μισθός, τῷτο καὶ μόνον, ὅτι ἐκ λύκων σόματατος ἐξῆρες χάραν σῶαν, μηδὲν παθουσαν.

* So says Mr. Jones, and he says most truly.—Nothing can be too bad for those who could *at all* bear what we have *tamely* borne.

"That 'tis his business to provide
 "For people's tastes, and not to guide;
 "And with the nice and squeamish town,
 "That novelties alone go down."

But can we not *ourselves* produce
 These novelties for Irish use,
 That we to foreign hands must roam,
 For goods we us'd to make at home?
 Where is the soul of drama fled?
 Is genius paralyz'd or dead?
 That artless Southerne's* parent shore
 Produces tragic bards no more.
 Shall Farquhar's, Congreve's, native isle
 No more with wit peculiar smile?
 And can no kindred soul, from death,
 Catch †Sheridan's expiring breath,
 And give the Stage, for one life more,
 A lease of humour's choicest store?—

—Does

* "Divini ingegni, i quali, coi lor bellissimi pensieri e nobilissimi opere la patria ed età loro adornavano. Tolom. Oraz."

And shall we never see their like again?—

† Mr. Sheridan, we are told, is employed in dramatising the story of "*The Forty Thieves*,"—it is not impossible,—his last play of Pizarro was precisely in the taste of the *Tragedy* ridiculed in the Critic for "its magnificence, its battle, its noise, and its procession;" why may not his next performance be a *Comedy* of that useful class, so much praised by Mr. Smeat, "which dramatizes the penal laws, and renders the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey."—Alas! and was Mr. Sheridan's youth employed only in erecting Standards by which we were to measure the caducity of his age?—and may we apply
 Ovid's

—Does time, with niggard hand, inspire
 Our later age with feebler fire?—
 Heaven ne'er inflicts a *mental* blight.
 On *all* abilities outright;
 The rain and wind will ruin corn,
 But what can mildew wit unborn,
 And blast, like barley, wheat or bere,
 Genius. "en ventre de sa mere?"

Causes, obscure to vulgar sight,
 The poet and the player unite;
 Swayed by the magnet of the mind,
 Their laws the same, their powers combin'd,
 They draw, with mutual influence,
 To folly, or direct to sense.
 And hence, 'tis thought, that the defect
 Springs from the Manager's neglect;
 Tho' with encomia loud and vain.
 He vaunts the ill-assorted train
 Whom half-price salaries engage,
 To lumber and disgrace our stage.—
 "For who, of common sense," (we say,)
 "Would *write* what there are none to *play*,"
 "Or venture to entrust his pieces
 "To such a company as this is,

"Who

Ovid's prediction of the melancholy decay of the person to the more lamentable decay of a beautiful *mind*.

—Decens longis vitiabitur annis:
 Rugaq; in antiquâ *mente* senilis erit:
 Injicietq; manum *ingenio* damnosa senectus. (1803.)

OVID. TRIST. III. 7.

" Who seem with equal skill to handle
 " *Lock and Key, and School for Scandal.*
 " Holman* may carry to our neighbours
 " Of Drury Lane, his Irish labours,
 " And

* Holman is now in London, soliciting the ‡acceptation of a piece, written during his residence in Ireland. (1803.)

The play, it appears, has been damned; but this does not affect my argument: had it been brought out here, it would have been *doubly* damned, once for its own sake, and again for that of the players. (1804.)

Mr. Holman laden with all the honours and profits of his *damned* play has kindly resumed his situation in our theatre,—“a robustious perriwig-pated fellow that tears a passion to rags,”—when Mr. Jones had the good fortune to get loose from him, I wonder that he had not the wisdom to remain so: but Mr. Holman, forsooth, writes him a letter, “that many persons in Dublin are anxious to *see* him, (Mr. Holman,) and that, as he can’t (good soul!) think of disappointing his (Mr. Holman’s) friends, if Mr. Jones does not engage him, (Mr. Holman,) he (Mr. Holman) must of necessity *read* plays, during the winter, at the Rotunda.” Proh inauditum! the Theatre Royal was afraid to contend with such a rival, and Mr. Holman was engaged, on the strength of this letter, at a salary greater than the *aggregate* salaries of Messrs. Talbot, Richard Jones, and Williams, Miss Walstein, and Mrs. Hitchcock. It must be confessed, that this single epistle of Mr. Holman’s has had more effect than all mine. After this, can we be at a loss for an answer to Ovid’s question, “Quid epistola lecta nocet?” (1805.)

‡ ACCEPTATION—Reception, whether *good* or *bad*!! Johnson’s Dict. VOC. ACCEPTATION.

" And Moore,* with Coleman's aid evince
 " His genius in the *Gipsev Prince*;
 " But bards, in general, would be undone,
 " By the mere journey up to London.
 " And thus, in Irish durance pent,
 " The brightest mind must be content
 " To see our †Thespian murderers maul
 " His scenes, or else not write at all."—
 It follows hence, that 'tis by rumour
 Alone, we know of Irish humour,

And

* Moore, Tommy Moore.—In Ireland we used to shew our admiration of his poetic talents, by asking him to supper; in England they reward him with a commercial, and, in some degree, legal office: this shows the difference of the national taste;—with us, abilities are dissipated in conviviality; and, with them, fettered by the ties of interest and business. Between us, I fancy, poor Tom is not likely to be much improved, or *even enriched*. And I am truly sorry for it; for, with about as many faults as other people have, he possesses twice as much genius and agreeability as any body else. I cannot say much for his morality.

† In such hands, if any person were mad enough to write for the Irish stage, I fancy we might say with the French Vaudeville:

Tandis que l'un tombe sur l'or,
 L'autre tombe dans la misère;
 Rarement on tombe d'accord,
 Beaucoup tombent dans la rivière.
 On voit quelquefois un amant
 Tomber aux genoux de ses belles;
 Mais ce qui tombe très souvent,
 Ce sont nos *pieces nouvelles*.

And our dramatic talent all is
 Comprized in Atkinson* and L——.†
 Poor Atkinson, kind hearted creature,
 Soul of good humour and good nature,
 Whose inoffensive gabble runs
 Eternal, with eternal puns,
 But fit to write a play, no more
 'Than Jacob Poole, ‡ or Lord Glandore. ||

L——

* Joseph Atkinson, Esq. M. R. I. A. &c. &c. author of "Love in a Blaze," an operatical drama; a strange collection of stupid, and sometimes indecent vulgarisms, upon which Sir John Stevenson threw away some very good music, which it had cost him much trouble to *compile*.

"A cette merveille-là,

"Plus d'un spectateur bailla."

Some even went farther, and were rude enough to hiss; nor had poor Atkinson the satisfaction of adding to the "*populus me sibilat*," the "*nummus contemplor in arcâ*"—his piece was damned, and most unprofitably damned, though he himself attended the representation, and encouraged it with extraordinary efforts of personal applause.

† L——, the author of "*Trial's All*," a comedy, produced not long since at Crow-street. If I remember rightly, the plot was, that a young man, accused of a conspiracy, is brought to trial and acquitted; *what could have turned Mr. L——'s cogitations to such Green-street subjects?*

‡ Jacob Poole, our late Lord Mayor, a citizen of pretorian activity and critical acumen.

|| Lord Glandore.—I am told that this noble Peer is a scholar, and a man of parts; shall I venture to own, I never could discover in him any resemblance to either. He might make a good Lord of the bed-chamber, but for any thing else—!!!

L——, indeed, I own is not
 Unfit to carry on a *plot*,*
 And, as we're ready to confess,
 Preserves the *unities* to excess;
 But for the rest,—the glowing mind,
 Terse thought, and dialogue refined;
 He'll do our country as much honour,
 As Nelson, Russel, or O'Connor.
 Unhappy Dowling!† on your head,
 The crimes of other men were shed,

B 3

And

* Can these mean *play-house* plots and unities?—Mr. L——, I am told, has consulted counsel, with a view of prosecuting my Printer for a libel. Is this then the stuff of which *patriots* are made? Are those the men who profess friendship to the *liberty of the press*? The very word *Press* conjures up odd recollections, and they are not recollections of consistency and candour.

† Dowling.—This person, from being a *brazier*, metamorphosed himself into a very middling painter, and, finally, became an indifferent actor, under the title of Mr. Herbert.—He fathered L——'s play, which, before representation, was extolled as a miracle of genius, but, alas! "*Trial's All*"—the piece was not so fortunate as its hero. I do not forget to Mr. Dowling the play he chose for his benefit, in a time of sedition and Jacobinism, when even those, who, in general, were incredulous of proverbs, began to fear, that '*Vis unita fortior*' was out too true. I hope Mr. Dowling's error was not intentional; or, if it was, that he has come to a sounder way of thinking.

Mr. Dowling is, I am informed, desirous, that I should let the public know that I was mistaken in calling him a *brazier*, for that in fact he was an *ironmonger*—be it so—he shall be any thing he pleases but Terence.

And L——, prudently dismayed,
 *Mourn'd his lost offspring in the shade,
 And from his secret bower discern'd
 You, suffering hisses he had earn'd,
 Whilst in your *secret* soul you thought
 'Twere better hammer pan or pot,
 Or e'en with hireling pencil trace
 G——n's † shape, or K——x's † face,
 'Than hope to rise to wealth or fame,
 By father'd play and borrow'd name.
 Peace to such dramas and such wits——
 Be they, in deep oblivion's pits,
 Inter'd, from hoot and hiss exempt,
 Beneath the tombstone of contempt,
 Each with this epitaph,—" Here lies
 " A corpse, oh never may it rise!"
 But if there be, as poets tell,
 For dramas damn'd, some critic hell,‡

There

* " —— In *umbrâ*

" *Amissos quæritur* foetus."——

So far Mr. L—— went, but I hope he has felt no inclination
 " *integrare miserabile carmen.*"

† G——n, K——. Had these gentlemen not been often
 assured that they were not beauties, I should not have pre-
 sumed to have made them the *au pis aller* of a painter's
 aversion.

‡ Somewhat of this kind is Milton's limbo, where are to be
 found

All the unaccomplish'd works of nature's hand
 Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed.

P. L. III. 455.

There shall your hapless works "lie howling,"
Oh L——, A——, and D——.

Here, in her loose and careless style,
Permit the *muse to pause a while,
Soon shall she take her flight abroad
† Armed with thè laurel and the rod,
With equal justice, thro' the town,
Error to lash, or merit crown.

* Per quella strada,——

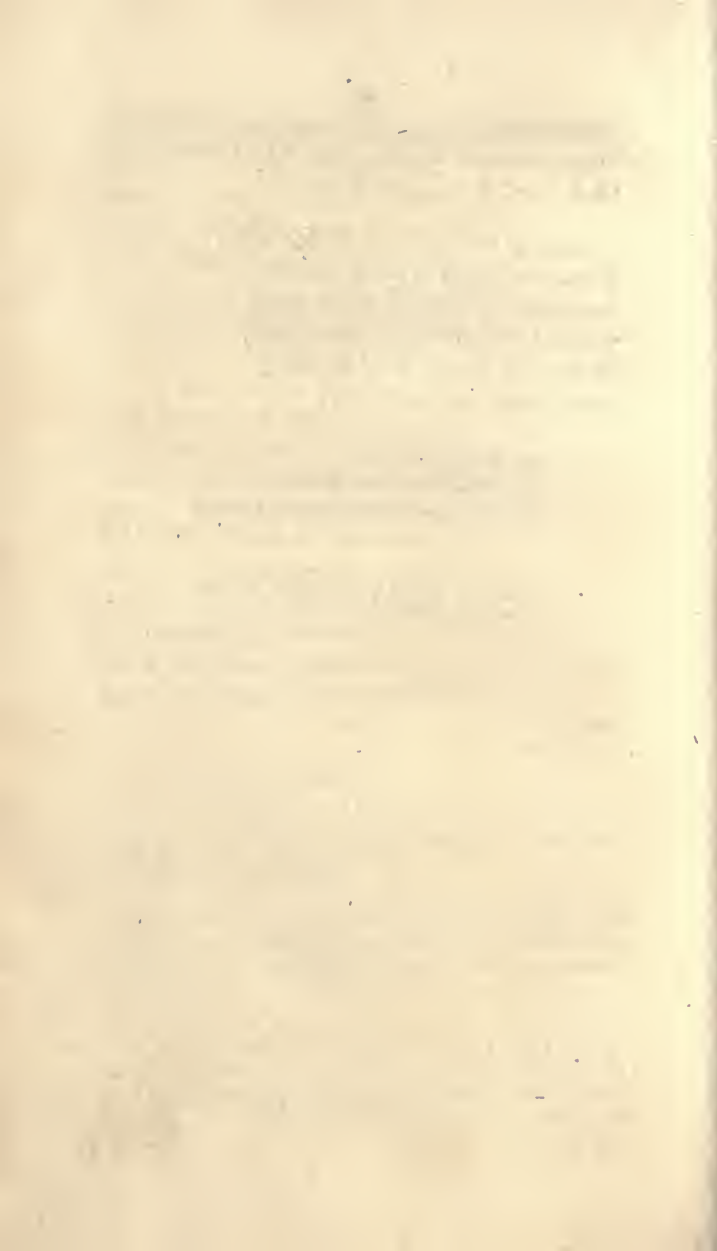
A gli nemici se n' andò diritto:

Quel che segni, nell' altro canto è scritto.

ORI. FUR. C. VIII.

† Στέμμά τ' ἔχων ἐν χερσὶν ἐκητόλυσ' Ἀπόλλωνος,
Χρυσέῳ ἀνὰ σκηπτέρῳ.

ΙΔΙΑΔ, α.



SECOND EPISTLE.



Mimæ, balatrones, hoc genus omne
Mœstum ac sollicitum est.

HOR. L. I. S. 2.

A FLOURISH, trumpets! beat ye drums,
The Crow-street corps in triumph comes,
Fierce in theatric pride,* they take
The hostile field for glory's sake,
To vindicate before the town
Their master's honour and their own;
And prove to visual demonstration,
The justice of their reputation.

In

* This allegorical or rather prophetic commotion, which, in the first Edition, was only a vision of fancy, has been fully realized.—In vain did the Patentee advise the players not to buy the Book, in vain did he send one copy to the Green-room, to supercede the necessity of general purchase, in vain did he exhort them to say nothing about it, and that it would “die and be forgotten”—all in vain, the pertinacious Book would *not* die, and the indiscreet actors took care it should not be forgotten—*οἱ μὲν σεναχοντο κατα πτόλιν*—this, with perhaps some little merit in the work, has been the occasion that three thousand copies have been sold in a few months, and that the eyes of all my countrymen have been directed to a subject of national importance—“nunc” I may say with Tacitus. “perfecto spectaculo apertum iter.”—

In person every gallant soul
 That nightly drains the tragic bowl;
 And all, who, in the comic strife,
 Kick up their heels and call it life;
 And every son of farce, and all
 Who op'ras scrape, or op'ras squall;
 Each Leap-Jack that thro' ballets capers,
 And all who light and snuff the tapers,
 And last the household forces rally,
 Led on by modest Mc. A——ly;*
 Who in the ardour of hostility,
 Forgets his *annual* civility,
 Which (to the moon as ocean flows)
 Comes with his benefit and goes.
 Eager for fight the heroes brandish
 Their swords, the box-keeper his standish,
 The tribe of *Shuffletons*,† their switches,—
 Their truncheons ghosts,—their brooms the witches:
 The

* I did this man the injury to omit his name in my first Edition: his subsequent conduct induces me to rectify my error. His activity to discover the Author of these Letters, has been as constant as unsuccessful, and his criticisms on my Work, aye, the *deputy Box-keeper's criticisms*, have been as daring as ridiculous; a kind of old-clothes'-man of news, he ran about picking up shreds and patches of information, with which he formed a party-coloured jacket for the imaginary author.—I did not wish to mention him, but *he* knows by what imperious means he has forced himself into the honour of "hitching into verse," but I hope I have gagged him at last, and that, henceforward, he may be deterred from thinking or speaking of what heaven has set apart from low rank, and mean understandings.

† The *tribe* of *Shuffletons*, because the authors, and (where they have omitted it) the actors have, of late, represented all

young

The Mechanists,* in dire commotion,
 With storms disturb the earth and ocean,
 Blow up their mines, burst rocks in sunder,
 And roll, like Jove of yore, the thunder.

But most of all, the †hireling race,
 Whose labours Kuster's art disgrace,
 Beat, with intense and fruitless pains,
 The place that *shou'd* contain their brains,
 To earn a mean and paltry bribe‡ ill,
 And what they cannot answer, libel.

And

young men of rank or vivacity, with a most disgusting sameness of vulgarity, folly and vice, —“*facies omnibus una.*”

* Mechanists. I place those gentlemen near the summit of my climax, because really their *élèves*, the sea, the rocks, the trees, and the tempests, are the most admired, and indeed the best performers we have. I have more than once seen an unruly audience entirely appeased by a thunder-storm; and a well-timed shower of rain never fails (if sufficiently violent) to produce the most comfortable and tranquillising effects.

† I was at first perplexed to know how to treat those creatures, “*mihi autem nec silere honestum neque proloqui expeditum.*” I have taken a middle course, I have described the species without mentioning (I had almost said *enquiring*, *quod et verum*) the names of the individuals.

‡ It is a fact, and to my knowledge, that some writers in the public Journals, who are mean enough to flatter the managers and actors, and base enough to revile their opponents, are rewarded with free admissions to the Theatre.—But indeed they are overpaid, for really they are hurtful only to their employers,

* And now behold, amongst them flies
 Loose Falsehood, rolling squinting eyes;
 And bearing thro' th' embattled field,
 Foul Impudence's changeless shield—
 Of lasting brass is formed each bound,
 And slanderous serpents hiss around—
 With this she speeds her way along,
 To fire and animate the throng,
 Thro' thick and thin, in wrong or right,
 To vengeance and eternal fight.

“ Rest, rest, perturbed spirits rest ;”
 Smooth the brow, and calm the breast ;
 Silence your howls and still your moans,
 Ye Jackall Gazetteers of Jones.
 † Be not at me at the menace flung,
 Move not at me the unlicensed tongue,

Shake

ployers, and they seem to be blessed with a *retrograde activity* that reminds one of the poor folks in Dante,

Mirabilmente apparve esser travolto,
 Ciascun dal mento al principio del casso :
 Che dalli reni era tornato 'l volto,
 E indietro venir li convenia,
Perchè il veder dinanzi era lor tolto.

INFERN. CANT. XX.

* ——— Μετὰ δὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,
 Αἰγὶδ' ἐρίτιμον, ἀγῆραον, ἀθανάτην τέ
 Τῆς ἱκατὸν θύσανοι παγχρύσειοι ἠερέθοντο,
 Σὺν τῇ παιφάσσουσα διέσσυτο λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν
 Ὀτρύνουσα ἄλληλκτον πολεμίζειν.

† I do not wish, in the slightest degree, to restrain either public or private criticisms on my little book, but I entreat the dunces not to attribute *their* dullness to *me*, who have really faults enough of my own to answer for.

Shake not at me the leaden skull,—
 Is it *my* crime that you are dull?
 —Is it my crime, that in those days,
 When the young mind its germ displays,
 Your withering reasons stunted grew,
 Bathed in no mild Castalian dew,
 Warmed by no rays that heaven imparts,
 Nor rear'd by learning's fostering arts?
 —That study on your minds, of yore,
 Engrafted not "the *ancient lore,"
 Nor trained your vigorous thoughts to shoot,
 In sweet succession,† flowers and fruit?—
 Is it my crime, that on the ground,
 You creep your native circle round,
 Low reptile weeds, that worthless run,
 Far from the invigorating sun?

Believe

* My unlucky quotations, by placing some sentences of my book beyond the reach of those who never had the good fortune of being sent to school, have exceedingly discomposed and distressed *all* the answerers and *some* of the players,—J'en suis fâché,—but had I totally omitted these scraps of "ancient lore," how would the condition of the dunces have been bettered? Let's have the opinion of Saint Jerome in this point, "Quando in manus nostras libri veniunt sapientiæ sæcularis, si quid in eis utile reperimus, ad *nostrum dogma* convertimus." Epist. 146.—So do I.—

† I too may be thought as incapable as the dunces of bearing flowers and fruit of my own, but at least I have now and then procured them for my readers from the gardens of Greece and Italy.

"Scelgo questo, scelgo quello,
 "Mi diletto d'ogni fior."—

Rolli.

Believe me, I lament your lot,
And wish you all—that you are not,
The heirs of learning, temper, sense,
Good-breeding, taste and eloquence.

You, too, oh curb your thoughtless rage,
Heroes and heroines of the stage!
Vain is your bustle, and your fear
Causeless, no enemy is near.
Tho' some would have the world suppose
The players and I were private foes,
—That with the men (much injured souls)
I'd quarrell'd o'er our midnight bowls;
—Or that unanswered love I felt,
And stabb'd the heart I could not melt;
—Or that I drawl my hateful whine,
Because Jones asks me not to dine;
Good reasons all—but urg'd in vain!
No midnight bowls with players *I* drain,
Try no fair Thespian's heart to move,
Nor sadly sigh unanswered love;
And from Jones equally despise,
His farces and *his fricasees.

Had those, indeed, whose smile is fame,
Whose judgment truth, whose censure shame,
Condemned me by their critic nod,
In silence I had kissed the rod:—

—Had

* Why am I obliged to recur to a subject which (I hear) is disagreeable to Mr. Jones, *tho' God knows why?* I hoped that, if I had even told his excellent story of a ham stewed in Madeira, he would have forgiven me. I find, however, that I was mistaken, and I should never have again touched on the subject, had I not been *forced* to do so.

—Had *Charleville with well bred sneer,
 Hinted my verse was *too* severe,
 And bid me, for example, mark
 The harmless mirth of Joan of Arc;
 —Had †Kearney, at the bard's expence,
 Cast off his learned indolence,
 And with grave pleasantry reproved,
 The failings of the muse he loved;
 —Had ‡Kirwan analyzed my lay,
 And found it dull and worthless clay,
 Save where a vein of *lead* or *brass*
 Or *salt* of malice streak'd the mass;
 —||Had classic Preston's friendly tongue
 Repressed my hopes, and check'd my song;

—Or

* “*Multâ morum elegantia,*” and perhaps I may even add, “*ingenio inlustris*”—will Lord Charleville permit me to say that I do not approve the expenditure of his taste and talents on a certain *translation* attributed to him; I know that, like Ovid's personage, it has been said to be “*bipennifer arcas,*” but this I can hardly believe. I am happy however to be able to offer to my Lord Charleville the unmingled praise of being a generous and knowing patron of learning, and the arts, and a most amiable and honourable gentleman.

† *Summâ sibi exactâ licentiâ jocandi* (as Suetonius says) the Provost is too just to deny it to another, and I believe I have the honour of reckoning him amongst the foremost of these who acknowledge, that they have been amused by my “*lusus in theatrum.*”

‡ What could I add to the fame of him whose works are read in every city in Europe——except Dublin.

|| The highest praise which these Epistles have received, was couched in a report that they were written by William Preston—this consoles me for the mortification of hearing them attributed to a thousand fools.

—Or yet the *nameless* bard, whose powers
 Deck'd party politics with flowers,
 And from the sullen **Orange* press'd
 Grateful sense, and pungent jest;
 —†Had Browne, who hardly will agree
 To abandon *Nero*, fled from me,
 And ranged beneath the adverse banners
 One friend to candour, taste and manners;

Had

* The *Orange*, a work still anonymous but “*δὲν ἀμύμονον*,”—while I admire and respect the author's abilities, I must, however, protest against being considered as the friend, or even favourer, of his theological politics.—I have no fears of the *prisca religio*,

—— Quâ, multa sacerdos

Ligneæ contuleret veterum *simulacra* deorum.

Ov. METAM. X.

† Arthur Browne, L. L. D. His Majesty's Prime Serjeant, a senior fellow of Trinity College,—Boccalini, in his *Ragguagli di Parnasso*, pretends that Nero gave Tacitus a million of money in reward for the historian's praises of him in the XIII. book of his *Annals*. What sum would Boccalini award to the Prime Serjeant who in his “*Essays on miscellaneous Subjects*,” has far exceeded Tacitus in zeal for this calumniated prince, and has, at least, proved, according to the proverb, that ‘the devil is not so black as he is painted.’ It must indeed be confessed, that nothing could have been more wise and beneficent than the measures which Tacitus ascribes to this prince for the convenience and embellishments of the city of Rome. The account of one of those improvements is peculiarly striking, “*Jam aqua privatorum licentiâ intercepta, quo largior et pluribus locis in publicum flueret, &c. &c.*”—Murphy's translation talks of pipe-water *commissioners*—but Murphy is an Irishman.

*Had Smith's enlarged and various mind,
 Deep, playful—vigorous and refined,
 Seen in my song, the vulgar sallies
 Of falsehood, ignorance, and malice,
 And at *his own* and merit's foes,
 Pointed his *epigrams in prose*——
 THEN, would the trembling muse submit,
 Chastised by manners, sense, and wit,
 Bow to *their* sentence, nor presume,
 To stickle for a gentler doom,
 But under sorrow's conscious load,
 Would sing her humble palinode:——
 But as it is—while Learning smiles,
 On the light nothing that beguiles
 Her hours subseive—while my verse
 Themis's laughing sons rehearse,
 And Taste, (its nicer thoughts restraining)
 Owns that my folly's *entertaining*,
 In vain shall fiery †F— task all
 Who praise my book with “rogue and rascal,”

In

* One of the Barons of the Exchequer,—“*optimi viri filium, optimâ ipsum spe præditum, summæ denique dignitatis,*”——those who are acquainted with the metaphysical and logical precision of his thoughts and expressions will guess what I mean by “*epigrams in prose*!!” Baron Smith will at first persuade himself, that, he knows who I am, yet it is very possible that his *first* opinion may be erroneous, and I am not sure that the *second* or the *third* will be correct.

† This alludes to a very strange circumstance—one F—having by some means found his way into the green-room of Crow-street, was pleased, as it is said, to deliver his critical opinion of my book in the following elegant sentence, “the book's

In vain shall Jones, for those who judge ill,
Wave o'er his head a critic * cudgel;
At angry words, and arguing staffs
Alike, the muse indignant laughs,
Nor work they deeper on *her* thoughts,
Than erst on *Talbot* and on *Potts*.

Mean is the soul whose sour chagrin,
Private hate, or causeless spleen,

Aims

book's a rascally book, and whoever likes it is a rascal;" to this morceau of logic and good manners, Mr. Talbot, who happened to be present, calmly replied "that he could not think so, as the work had undoubtedly some degree of merit;" at which tasteless and outrageous assertion of Mr. Talbot's, the critic was rash enough "δ'εἰπεῖν (ὅιμοι) τλημονέστατον λόγον." The consequence was, that Mr. Talbot, who (whatever be his *taste*) has all the spirit of a gentleman, took immediate and effectual vengeance, and soon brought down our over hasty Aristarchus to a more rational and moderate stile of *criticism*.

* "*Baculus* pars est ornatûs *histrionici*" says the commentator on Suetonius, and this I suppose was the authority of the musical Lindsay, for arming himself with "a quarter-staff wherewithal to slay every of those" who should dislike his singing; but as neither Suetonius nor his commentator assert the "*baculus*" to be a part of the *manager's* equipment, I am at a loss to know what could induce a gentleman of Mr. Jones's rank and character to *adorn* himself with that "*inutile lignum*" (as it turned out to be,) which so amazed Mr. Potts's printer's devils.—But, to be serious, I hope and indeed believe, that Mr. Jones did not intend to controul the liberty of the Press; by assault and battery, and that the fear which needlessly seized those devils, exaggerated a walking switch into a tremendous cudgel.

Aims to wound, with felon dart,
 The feelings of the honest heart—
 'Gainst him, the assassin, may the cries
 Of universal vengeance rise;
 And justice place in every hand,
 A * scourge to lash him thro' the land;
 But shall we spare the venal mind,
 Of hungry cowards, base and blind,
 Who wade thro' flattery's filthy way
 For fear of blows, or hopes of pay.—
 Such as with mercenary aim,
 Scatter around promiscuous fame.
 Equal to Garrick or to Barry
 The Hero † of the push and parry;—
 —Discreetly hint that sportive Clive
 In Davidson ‡ is still alive:—
 Or with more shameless puff will tell ye
 That Cooke || is equal to Corelli;

And

* Othello, act V.

† One Galindo, a very good fencing-master, *perhaps*, a very indifferent player, most certainly. If Bonaparte ever obtains the dominion of the Irish republic, I hope he will not have the ingratitude to forget him who so pompously displayed the triumphs of Marengo, in the very Theatre *Royal* of the Capital.—Mr. Jones, Mr. Jones, you permitted it! Is not your name in the red-book Mr. Jones, as one of the Viceroy's household?

‡ Davidson. I pity this poor girl, who is for ever obtruded on the public in parts very unfit for her; she may, for aught I know, have her own little merits, but they must be in a very different style of character from that she usually plays.

|| Cooke. The modest and diffident Mr. Tom Cooke, who played on *eight* different instruments for his *own* benefit;—I
 am,

And liken, with unhallow'd scandal,
 His *noises* to the strains of Handel.*
 Far, far from these my course is drawn,
 Averse to slander, or to fawn;
 Raised high above those groveling cares,
 That fetter journalists and players,
 Too distant from their humble life,
 To share its fondnesses, or strife.
 I've no temptation, thanks to fate,
 To lie from hunger or from hate.——
 ——Come then, dear Jones, as Colonels use
 To attend the general that reviews,

“ Bear,”

am sure it was neither benefit or pleasure to any one else. This person writes *new* overtures, to all the operas which are imported to our stage, beginning generally with *chords*, and ending with an Irish *jig*, and this he calls *composition*. The young man, however, has some merit, and if he went to London, would probably earn two or three guineas a week, by playing country-dances at the winter balls.—Seriously, I wish he could be taught a little science, a little taste, and a little modesty, and he might be a very useful and agreeable fiddler.

* “ I hope” (says the elegant author of the *Few Reflections*,) “ that after he (Mr. Tom Cooke) has read this book of mine (Mr. Reflector,) “ he will compose such an overture as he “ need not be ashamed to play at the *Irish Anacreontic Society*, “ and such as”—what for a ducat?—“ as HANDEL himself “ would be *proud* to own!!!” Really, the boast of the imperial fiddler; (I beg Doctor Brown’s and Tacitus’s pardons;) “ *se omnia facienda fecisse*” was modesty, mere puling modesty, in comparison with the ignorant assurance of Mr. Tom Cooke’s admirer.

“Bear,” by my side, “a wary eye,”
And see your regiment pass by.

First Talbot* comes, the first indeed—
But fated never to succeed,
In the discerning eye of those
Who form their taste on Kemble’s nose,
And deem that genius a dead loss is,
Without dark brows, and long proboscis;
Talbot, ’tis certain, must despair
To rival Kemble’s sombrous stare,
Or reach that quintessence of charms
With which black Roscius moves his arms.
A trifling air and stripling form,
Ill-fitted to the tragic storm:
A baby face, that sometimes shows
Alike in transports or in woes,
Will ne’er permit him to resemble,
Or soar the tragic flights of Kemble;
Yet in some †scenes together plac’d
With greater feeling, equal taste,

c

From

* Talbot. Tho’ I have so fully given my opinion of Mr. Talbot in verse, let me however add in prose that I fear he is not quite so great a favourite behind the curtain, as he is before it.—I should wish to see him oftener.

† Tullus Aufidius in *Coriolanus*, and Lysimachus in *Alexander*, (amongst many parts) are fine specimens of his ability—whether it arises from emulation or chance, I cannot determine, but he certainly plays best, when he plays with Kemble.

From a judicious audience draws
 As much and as deserv'd applause.*
 But whatsoe'er his tragic claim,
 He rules o'er comedy, supreme,†
 By art and nature chastely fit
 To play the gentleman or wit;
 Not Harris's, nor Coleman's boards,
 Nor all that Drury-lane affords,
 Can paint the rakish Charles‡ so well,
 Give so much life to‡ Mirabel;
 Or show, for light and airy sport,
 So exquisite a‡ Doricourt.
 Sometimes it seems that thoughts arise,
 That cloud his brow, and dim his eyes,—

Buried

* Will the reader forgive me for requesting him at this passage, and at some others, where *truth has given me leave to praise*, to turn back to the extracts from the Freeman's Journal, in page 21 of the Preface—well, you have read it—pray what do you think of the *Kitchenstuff* Gazette, of the Literary Ragouts of our modern Mistyllus and Taratalla? I know your answer—

“ O dura *lectorum* ilia!

“ Quid hoc veneni sævit in præcordiis?

“ Num viperinus his cruor

“ *Incoctis verbis* me fefellit?

Hor. Epo. III.

† Let me not be understood to represent Talbot as a *perfect* comic actor, when I only consider him, as the least distant from excellence, of any that I have *late*ly seen.—Proximus, sed *intervallo*.

‡ Charles, Mirabel, and Doricourt. I have seen him play, at least the two former of those characters at Drury-lane with universal admiration.—Mrs. Jordan (no very bad judge) thinks him, as I am told, the best Mirabel on the stage.

Buried be such within his breast;
There while he's acting let them rest;
Nor on his countenance be shown,
Whining mirth and maudlin fun;—
Nor let him negligent of grace,
Swing his arms and writhe his face,
Nor sway and balance with his form,
Like sailors walking in a storm;
But move the course, by Garrick* track'd in,
And act—as if he were not acting;—
So every tedious ordeal pass'd,
Fortune *must* crown his toils at last.

* See *Retaliation*.

THIRD EPISTLE.



Quoniam semper appetentes gloriæ atque avidi
laudis fuistis, delenda vobis est illa macula,

CIC. PRO. L. M.

IF youth and loveliness could charm,
Or shape the critic coldness warm,
Could gay variety dispense
On every essay, excellence;
And were we only bound to tell
How *much* one plays, and not how *well*;—
To Walstein* then, this votive line,
A galaxy of praise should shine,
And every word I write upon her,
Should offer eulogy and honour;—
But *she* whom all pursuits engage,
This female† Proteus of the stage,

Who.

* Walstein. On revising my opinion of this young lady, I find that it is perhaps too favourable—but *n'importe*, the world always receives a *man's* commendations of a pretty woman, *cum grano salis*.

† Πάντα δὲ γιγνώμηνος πειρήσατ'.

ΟΔΥΣ. Δ.

Who thro' all nature boldly flies,
 And in one little fortnight tries,
 Calista, Yarico, and Nell;
 And poor Sir Peter's rural belle,
 Cannot, in reason, hope to claim
 In *all* her parts, an equal fame.
 I own her feeling, taste and spirit,
 Her versatility of merit,
 I own that it were hard to find
 In *one*, more excellence combin'd;
 But should she therefore grasp at all,
 The gay, the grave, the great, the small;
 And, vainly prove herself at heart
 A kind of Crow-street Bonaparte,
 Will no one whisper that she plays ill,
 The froward mirth of Lady Teazle;
 Or hint that nothing can beguile,
 To *humour*, her sepulchral* smile?
 Her eye in tragic glances roll'd,
 The length'ning nose of Kemble mould,

And

* Sepulchral smile. A legal wit said of a brother barrister that a smile on his countenance was like plating on a coffin. Such is Miss. Walstein's attempt to look sprightly: She plays the gay parts of Lætitia Hardy tolerably, because she plays them in a mask. To her success, however, in this character, we are to attribute a good deal of the vanity of which I complain; I wish she could get some of her *male acquaintance* to translate for her use, this excellent precept of Horace:

Memento—servare mentem,
 Ab insolenti temperatam
 Lætitia.

And chin eternal, must prevent
 Her looking *archly* innocent.
 Poor Mirabel,* by Kemble play'd,
 Look'd like Macbeth in masquerade—
 And Siddons,† in her mirth, we find
 Mixing up Shore with Rosalind; ‡
 Learn, Walstein, from their baffled pride,
 To follow *nature* as your guide,
 Or—but the candid muse will spare
 Comparisons 'twere hard to bear!—
 Alas! how willingly I'd raise
 The song of *undiminish'd* praise;
 If, spite of beauty and of youth,
 You were not still less fair than *truth*.||
 But tho' my tongue 's unskilled to shower,
 Such honied praise as falls from ———,
 What tho' with ———'s gentle art
 I cannot lull the ear or heart,

Believe

* I have had the misfortune to see this exhibition; truly it was, as Shakespeare says, "most tragical mirth."

† Miss Walstein seems to have no more objection to appear, in breeches, before two or three hundred men, than Mrs. Siddons—though they are equal in modesty, they are very unlike in personal attractions, and poor Siddons did the less mischief.

‡ I have heard of a lady, who wept plentifully throughout the whole of "As you like it," from an unhappy opinion, that Rosalind was Jane Shore. I am glad to relate the anecdote, that so much good tears should not go for nothing.

|| Amicus Plato magis amica veritas. (1805.)

Believe me, Walstein, that I *feel*
 As pure respect, as candid zeal,
 As flattery *talks*—and that I blame
 The spots of error on your fame,
 Only in hopes to see it rise,
 Th' *unclouded* radiance of our skies.
 Yet, could I think my verse had drawn
 The slightest vapour o'er your dawn,
 From your fair breast one sorrowing sigh,
 One pearly tear-drop from your eye,
 By heaven, I would not, for the praise
 With which *kind* tongues have blessed my lays,
 Nor yet for all that *dearer* fame,
 Which, from the dunces' hate, I claim,
 Have caused, by falsehood's shaft severe,
 That sorrowing sigh, that pearly tear.

Away—for sad Galindo* room!
 Living memento of the tomb;
 Upon her dark unalter'd brow
 Sits one eternal cloud of woe,
 And from her throat a voice she heaves
 Like winds that moan thro' ruin'd caves;
 The trembling stage she passes o'er,
 As if she stepp'd knee deep in gore;
 And every dismal glance she scowls,
 Seems cast at daggers, racks, and bowls.

But

* In the former editions, this character immediately followed that of Mr. Talbot, but as I, in some degree, make Miss Walstein a standard by which I explain my opinion of Mrs. G., I have thought proper to transpose their portraits.

But this is error;—sternest grief
 Bars not the soul from all relief;
 And human feelings ne'er remain
 Stretch'd on the unceasing rack of pain.—
 Poor Shore, some rays of hope beguile,
 And Denmark's queen must sometimes smile;
 Maternal joy, in Constance, speaks,
 And lives on Lady Randolph's cheeks.—
 Short is the beam that breaks the night
 Of grief, but thence 'tis doubly bright,
 And woe so touching ne'er appears,
 As April smiles, thro' showers of tears.

Could but our fair one learn to bear
 An easier look, and lighter air,
 Give more emotion to her face,
 And to her shape a *varying* grace;
 With so much feeling, so much sense,
 We'd own her claim to eminence—
 Confess her easily the queen
 Of all that sweep *our* tragic scene,
 And fix her place* between (let's say)
 Siddons and Walstein, just half way.

c 3

But

* On the subject of the respective merits of Mrs. Galindo and Miss Walstein, I can easily believe, that my adjudication will be disputed by the admirers of the latter, "*car la beauté est dangereuse, et il n'y a pas de venin plus capable de corrompre l'intégrité d'un juge.*" But I guess the public will be, in general, of my opinion.—Mrs. Galindo is too *lugubre*, but she is still a very good actress *in her line*; and, to do her justice, *she* never makes herself ridiculous, by attempting parts for which she is not, in some degree, fitted.

But who is this, all boots and breeches,
Cravat and cape, and spurs and switches,
Grin and grimace, and shrugs and capers,
And affectation, spleen, and vapours?

Oh, Mr. Richard Jones,* your humble;
Prithee give o'er to mouth and mumble;
Stand still, speak plain, and let us hear
What was intended for the ear;
For faith, without the timely aid
Of bills, no parts you've ever played,
Handy, Shuffleton, or Rover,
Sharper, Stroller, Lounger, Lover,
Could I, amidst your mad-cap pother,
Ever distinguish from each other.
'Tis true that Lewis† jumps and prates,
And mutters, and extravagates;

But

* Richard Jones has a kind of merit, which, perhaps, he overrates, but which a little study may improve to more than respectability. He is always lively, often amusing, sometimes intelligible, seldom rational: on a stage nearly barren of merit, it is natural he should be "*feté*"—*unoculus inter cecos* is a very considerable person. He is almost the "*acteur gâté*" that Gil Blas describes, "*a qui le parterre pardonne tout; on lui marquoit trop le plaisir que l'on prenoit à le voir, aussi en abusait-il; si l'on eut sifflé, au lieu de crier miracle, on lui auroit souvent rendu justice.*"—Let me, however, do justice to his Diddler; the character is luckily as extravagant (I mean *metaphorically*) as the actor; and both are wonderfully outrés and entertaining.

† Lewis has great faults and great beauties; why should not R. Jones be as capable of imitating the *latter* as the former?
—He has undoubtedly no inconsiderable disposition towards
making

But then it equally as true is,
That, Mr. Jones! you *are* not Lewis.

What tho' with all the sprightly arts
Of hair-brain'd mirth you deck your parts;
What tho', whenever you appear,
Laughter with ready voice is near;
And that your happy nonsense draws
The doubtful meed of blind applause,
The judging few, whose critic praise
Is worth whole galleries' loud huzzas,
Lament to see your meteor fire
Of talents kindle and expire;
No steady ray of light it gives,
But lives and dies, and dies and lives;
As chance directs, or wrong or right,
The ignis fatuus of the night.

The vivid spark that heaven bestows,
On genius, not untended glows;
The breath of popular acclaim
Shakes and disturbs the infant flame;
And, unless sense her screen supplies,
It trembles, quivers, starts, and dies;
But fenced by judgment's crystal bound,
Pure and serene it beams around,
Diffusing thro' the mental shade
Its steady brilliancy and aid.

Jones!

making a good actor, and it is just to add, that he is very correct, and very assiduous, in his new parts. "*Juvat me hoc tribuisse,*"

Jones! to your ear my cautious lays,
 May seem too niggard of their praise—
 Perhaps 'tis true—and shall I own,
 They seem not *so* to you *alone*.
 And feared I not to turn a brain
 Already volatile and vain;
 Were I not anxious to repress,
 Youthful ambition's wild excess,
 I'd say, it equally as true is,
 That, Mr. Jones,* you *may be* Lewis.

Perennial Hitchcock now appears,
 Victorious o'er the frost of years;
 Fresh flowers adorn her latest days,
 A kind of Thespian *aloes*.—
 Blest in each walk of social life,
 Unwrung by care, unvex'd by strife;
 With placid mind, and temperate soul,
 She sees old Time innoxious roll,
 And, from his favouring pinions, shed
 Age unoppressive o'er her head.

Her acting, not unlike her fate,
 Nor meanly low, nor brightly great,
 She walks the stage's middle course,
 Without or feebleness or force;

And

* In the former editions, I said of Mr. R. Jones nothing but what I thought, but I did not say *all* that I thought. I have since observed so much good sense and candour, in the change which just criticism has operated in his acting, that I think I may at last trust him with the secret, that I know no young person, in his line, on any stage, of half his talents.

And, whatsoe'er she act, our eyes
No faults offend, no powers surprize.

But, let us own that, were she blest
With talents, such as Pope* possest,
Still we should grieve, to see her play
Every part,† and every day,
The young, the old, coquette, or prude,
Polish'd dame, or housewife rude—
Till, surfeited at last, we feel
The truth of “*la pâtre d'anguille*.”‡

* Miss Pope, *le dernier rejetton* of the old school, the pupil of the Garricks, the imitator of the Clives, and the best actress that the men of our day ever have seen, or perhaps ever will see. Those, who have had the happiness to see her Mrs. Heidelberg, with King's Lord Ogleby, and Wewitzer's Canton, in the Clandestine Marriage, may form an opinion of “how plays should be acted.”

† This is by no means the result of a *mis-timed* vanity in Mrs. Hitchcock; it is the necessary consequence of the miserable deficiency of good actresses, with which our drama is afflicted.—The public is rather under obligations to Mrs. Hitchcock, for the readiness with which she undertakes every thing that she thinks can conduce to their entertainment.

The variety of parts she is obliged by the poverty of the company to study and play, must be very distressing to a person of her age and situation—

—Nil parcunt Seni,
Si quæ laboriosa est, ad eam curritur,
Sin lenis est, ad aliam defertur.

TER. PROL. in HEAUTONTIM.

‡ La Fontaine.

FOURTH EPISTLE.



—Tragædus

Sub nutrice, velut si *luderet infans.*

HOR. EPIS. AD AUG.

HUSH! 'tis attention all around,
Fix'd is each eye and still'd each sound,
Silence on every lip is prest,
And pleasure throbs in every breast.
What is to come? will Barry rise,
Or Garrick glad our wond'ring eyes?
What miracle is to be wrought
Beyond the common scope of thought?
"The cry is now, they come, they come,"
And lo! Glenalvon, and—Tom Thumb:*

Now

* A child of the name of Betty, a native of Belfast, as it is said, has been very lately added to the force of the company, "mercy on us, a bearne; a very pretty bearne" indeed—but so young, as, even in the part of Douglas, to throw an appearance of ridicule and fantocinity over the whole performance. This folly of exhibiting children is not quite modern. "There is, Sir," says Rosincrantz to Hamlet, "an *aiery of young children, little eyases*, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically *clapped* for it.—These are now the fashion"—but I believe it never was, before this year, the fashion to introduce

Now clapping hands, and loud huzzas
 Thunder the rapture of applause,
 The very walls are rock'd, and why?
 The hero 's only *four* feet high!
 The noise redoubles,—we are told
 The hero 's only *twelve* years old!
 But oh! what language could we find,
 The raptures of the critic mind
 To tell, could we our Douglas* call,
 But *two years* old, and *two feet* tall!!!

No

duce *one* infant to play the first characters among men and women—oh! 'tis a dainty device to attract an audience; Daly's poney races were not much worse.

* Douglas.—Though I only take notice of this part, it is meet to set it down, that the *infant* played Romeo to Mrs. Kniveton's Juliet, and that they looked like an overgrown girl and her doll. I should not be much amazed to see him advertised for Henry VIII. or Sir John Falstaffe.—He has also played Prince Arthur: this was as it should be, *mirabile dictu*!

Since the first part of this note was written, this ill-fated Baby has been exhibited in *Hamlet!!!*—Absurdity, cruelty, and contempt, could have devised nothing *more* insulting to good sense, humanity, and the Public.

I was mistaken; cruelty and absurdity are more ingenious than I imagined: this poor child, after having been shewn through all the provincial towns of Ireland, Scotland, and England, has been at last exhibited in the metropolis of the Empire, amidst those cries of enthusiastic folly, for which that “*blatant beast*,” the populace of London, is so disgracefully notorious—every night was the unhappy *infant* obliged to play his distressing tricks, till, to crown all, the delicacy of the public, the liberality of the managers, and the tenderness
 of

No wonder Randolph should be jealous,
 He such a charming little fellow 's;
 See how he steps in stately pride
 At least six inches every stride;
 See how he swells with lordly rage
 Altho' no higher than a page;—
 In vain two barons, stout and gaunt,
 The little *Grildrig strive to daunt,
 O'er both he† triumphs, and alack!
 Slays one;—*Oh giant-killing Jack!!!*

And is this then the wond'rous bait
 For loud applause and houses great,

The

of his parents, goaded him to exertions so violent as to bring on a dangerous illness, and then—? why *then*—they published bulletins of his state of health as had been done of that of the King during his *Majesty's* indisposition.

Divisum imperium cum Jove Betty habet.

* “ The frequent labours I underwent every day,” (says *Grildrig*,) “ made, in a few weeks, a very considerable *change* in my *health*,” &c. &c. Indeed, the entire of the third chapter of the *Voyage to Brobdnag*, is worth the attention of those who are curious concerning Betty; it is really the best history of his life and adventures that has ever been published, though it has the disadvantage of being an hundred years old.

† The victory of Betty over Hargrave (*infelix puer*, atque *impar congressus Achilli*) was like the battles in *Mother Goose's Tales*, in which fairies never fail to overcome giants; but the wonder is not greater than that one individual should subdue the good sense of a whole city into a thralldom.

The Roscius,* this, whose radiance bright,
Should dim the ineffectual light
Of all the glow-worms of the stage,
Of every size and every age?

An infant taken from his school,
A pitying Public to befool,
A baby victim, to atone
For all the faults of folks full grown:
As for the people's sins, of old
They slew the firstlings of the fold,
And thought the *Gods* would never damn
Those who should sacrifice a lamb.

Poor child, thy age and infant fears,
Thy talent,† far beyond thy years,

Thy

* Roscius.—This was the *modest* title under which the “little eyase” was announced, “ad captandum vulgus,” and it did its office with a vengeance. I heard some of my brethren of the pit discoursing, “who this Roscius could be;” one learned gentleman asserted, that it was one Garrick’s christian name; but the general opinion seemed to be, that he was a French actor, who had been guillotined in the early days of the revolution. Those critics I observed to be particularly loud and *judicious* in their applauses, as might be supposed.

† La quale (dispositione) accompagnata del’ ajuto ordinario delle forze umane, può un giorno, rendere *quel giovine* de sommo talento. VII. DE SISTO. V.

I do not deny the *boy’s* abilities, but I protest against turning the stage into a nursery; and I lament that a promising child should be deprived “del’ ajuto ordinario,” which might
make

Thy simple tones untuned by art,
 Would melt to praise the critic heart,
 Were praise not *ruin*;—if you now
 To plain advice refuse to bow,
 And rather lay thy boyish claim
 To gusts of praise, than lasting fame;—
 For some few months we'll call you clever,
 And then, poor child,—farewell for ever.”
 But to thy studies hence again—
 Turn the page, and guide the pen;
 Leave to the fribble* and the fool,
 To scorn the seasoning of the school.
 In History's magic glass, descry
 How sages live, and heroes die;
 From lively Greece† and sober Rome,
 Import their manners and costume,‡

Weigh

make him an useful man, to be converted into a source of theatrical revenue, and public ridicule.—“ Young men,” says Bacon, “ should be *learners*, while men grown up are *actors* :” —This is true in every sense.

* The number of good actors who were not men of education is very small: but, now-a-days, we imagine that all talents come by inspiration, and that great abilities are the result of the temporary exertion of what are called, our *energies*.—“ Tout est bien, sortant des mains de l'auteur des choses, tour dégénère entre les mains de l'homme.” Many persons seem to have read no farther in *Emile* than the first sentence, which is the most false and sophistical in the whole work—*et c'est beaucoup dire*.

† Fatendum Latinos ferè à Græcis vinci *lepôre*, sed vincere *gravitate*. Voss. de Poet. Lat. c. 7.

‡ Were it not for some men of education, who, luckily for the pleasures of the world, became managers and actors, we should
 still

Weigh all thy parts with learn'd care,
 Be first a critic, then a player;—
 And when, too soon, the flight of time
 Shall give thy shape its manly prime,
 And thought and study have refined,
 And stored with classic taste thy mind;
 Then to the scene return and claim
 Thy well-earn'd meed,—perennial fame.*

Next

still have Cato played in a full-bottomed wig, and Coriolanus
 en habit galonné, and peruque a la reine—

When from the court a birth-day suit bestowed,
 Sinks the lost actor in a tawdry load.
 Booth enters;—hark! the universal peal!
 “But has he spoken?”—not a syllable,
 “What shook the stage and made the people stare?”
 Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.

POPE.

“Il portrait,” says Scarron of M. Destin, “des chausses troussées
 a bas d'attache, comme celles des comediens quand ils repre-
 sentent un héros de l'antiquité.”

The plates of Tonson's Edition of Shakespeare, 1709, afford
 most ridiculous specimens of this false costume; in one of
 them, Macbeth, equipped in all points, like a man of fashion
 of Queen Anne's court, is looking with some degree of surprize,
 at the ghost of Banquo, whose only habiliments are his shirt
 and an enormous periwig, like those which Lord Chancellors
 wear now a-days. Lear and Othello are still more whimsically
 metamorphosed.

* I have given, perhaps, to Betty more than his share of
 attention, but I shall not lament my trouble, if I should have
 any influence in dissuading him from persisting, at present, in
 his

Next Williams* comes, the rude and rough,
 With face most whimsically gruff,
 Aping the careless sons of ocean,
 He scorns each fine and easy motion;
 Tight to his sides his elbows pins,†
 And dabbles with his hands like fins;

Would

his dramatic pursuits, and in restoring him to the lessons of his masters 'till he can say with the son of Ulysses:—

————— ἔγω δ' ἔτι νήπιος ἦα.

Νῦν δ' ὅτε δε μέγας εἰμὶ, καὶ ἀλλων μυθὸν ἀκῶων

Πυνθάνομαι, καὶ δὴ μοι αἰξεται ἐνδοθὶ θυμὸς,

Πειρήσω.

Improved as this infant must be by a year's age and experience, I cannot change my opinion a son egard.—Undisturbed by the paroxysms of Cockney credulity, I repeat the assertion and prophecy which I made concerning him; the first is, that a child of twelve years old and four feet high (whatever be his talents), must be, on the same stage with men and women, *unnatural* and *contemptible*, and the second is, that if the violence of his course be not checked,

For some few months we'll call him clever,
 And then, poor child, farewell for ever.

* Williams. This man plays second rate characters, with fourth rate abilities—Some of his sailors are very well; and of this he is so satisfied, that knowing where his talent lies, he turns *all* his parts into *sailors*. His Crabtree, his Job Thornberry, his Ibrahim, are dismal instances of this *amphibious* merit

† ——— Vidi ego civis
 Retorta tergo brachia.

But the friends of freedom will rejoice to hear, that Mr. Williams, at the instigation of this passage, has of late given his elbows more liberty, than those unhappy captives hitherto enjoyed.

Would he display the greatest woe,
 He slaps his breast, and points his toe;
 Is merriment to be express'd,
 He points his toe and slaps his breast.
 His turns are swings,—his step a jump,
 His feelings, fits,—his touch a thump;
 And violent in all his parts,
 He speaks by gusts, and moves by starts.

And lo! his wife, whose every feature
 Foretells the talent of the creature;
 Lively and vulgar, low and pert
 She plays, *au vif*, the peasant flirt,
 And hits, without the slightest aid
 From *Art*, the saucy chamber-maid.*
 Oh! could a little sense controul
 The flight of her aspiring soul;—

Could

* *Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem
 Fortunarum habitum—*

I am sure Nature never intended Mrs. Williams for a fine lady, or even for a fine gentleman, a character she sometimes attempts. It is really disgraceful, that there should be no actress on the Dublin stage, capable of playing the well bred female characters of our best plays; poor Mrs. Williams is obliged to give up a line of acting in which she is very respectable, to stop, by the most ridiculous efforts, the gaps of the company—this is a heavy misfortune to the audience, but, “*en revanche*,” ’tis a great saving to the managers—good actresses demand good salaries, and Mrs. Williams is so much clear gain—

“*Intereà gustus elementa per omnia quærunt,*

“*Nunquam animo pretiis obstantibus.*”

Oh! *gustus* and actresses are very different things to a man of taste.—

Could she be satisfied with all
 The glories of the servants hall,
 Nor e'er with daring steps presume
 To figure in the drawing room;—
 Could she but wisely be content
 With *Mincing** and not *Millamant*,
 And following nature's humble course,
 Decline *Bizarre* and play *Lamorce*,
 None would have guess'd that she had ne'er
 Observ'd what life and manners were,
 Nor ever known a circle higher
 Than that around the green-room fire.

'Tis shame to offer to the view,
 This kind of "*paysanne parvenue*,"
 This Nell in Lady's robes array'd,
 This *hash* of mistress and of maid.
 And yet not all the blame attaches
 To her,—she *naturally* snatches,
 At spangled gowns, and caps of lace,
 To mend her figure and her face—
 But why this travesty permitted?
 Because we've no one better fitted;
 And thus in utter disregard
 Of right and wrong, our plays are marr'd;

An

* "*Fiat justitia.*" Mrs. Williams, much to her own interest,
 and to the great satisfaction of the public has taken my advice,
 and I have had the pleasure of seeing her play *Flora* extremely
 well, in a comedy which, before the publication of those *Epis-*
tles, she would have marred, by assuming *Violante*.—Poor
Violante, when Mrs. Daly died, might have said like another
 deserted lady,

O miseram, cui me *Violante*, relinques!

An useful actress is disgrac'd,
And insult braves the public taste.

But soft—the vulgar vapour clears,
Methinks a stranger form appears,
Diffusing light—not burning rays
That strike the senses with amaze,
But milder beams, that cheer the eyes,
And please you, tho' they can't surprize.

From British Baiæ's marble streets,
Where sickly gaiety retreats,
In mirth to spend its parting breath,
And die without a thought of death—
Welcome, endow'd with many a grace
Of form, and loveliness of face,
And many "a quip and wanton wile,"
And many a care-dispelling smile,
Edwin!*——and tho' 'tis true, that art
Has been your tutor, not the heart;
That, now and then, the *mimic* tone
Harshly subsides into your own;
And that your gestures, ill-according,
Are one half Edwin, one half Jordan;

I care

* Mrs. Edwin is, it cannot be denied, an imitator, and perhaps a mannerist; but she is a good actress in a line of characters which, before her arrival, were most miserably mangled.—Mr. Jones deserves, at least, the praise of having taken one part of *my* advice, in engaging a representative for "*the well-bred females of our drama.*" *Fas est, et ab hoste doceri.* But I have never been his enemy, and am even his *friend* when I see him, as in this instance, do exactly what he should.

I care not—if your humour, light
 Yet chasten'd, charm the wintry night,*
 Cheat care into a laugh, or gain
 The tribute of a smile from pain—
 I care not whence you stole the fire†
 Content to feel it, and admire,
 And wish all others would pursue
 Promethean larceny—like you.

No human good's without alloy,
 Pain treads upon the heels of joy,
 And as Philosophers remark,
 Each other`cause, like light and dark,
 So Heaven that dooms to equal fate
 The Thespian and the human state,
 With Mrs. Edwin *blest*'d our vows,
 But cursed us with her lubbard spouse—‡
 Yet let us spare him, for a *name*
 High on the rolls of comic fame,
 And on degeneracy take
 Compassion, for the parent's sake,
 Such as he sometimes feels, who views
 Howards or Russels cleaning shoes.

D

To

* “*Brumales lætè ut possit producere noctes.*”

† ————— Ignem

Quem summâ cœli raptum de parte Prometheus
 Donavit terris,—elemento gratulor.

Juv.

‡ The son of Edwin, of (as the jest books say) facetious memory,—he plays Falstaff—I shall say no *more* about him.

To bear our opera's whole weight
 The Atlas of our vocal state,
 Who *humbly* thinks that HE alone
 Can read a note, or swell a tone;
 Comes Phillips* writhing in grimaces,
 And tott'ring in his girlish paces.
 With feeble voice, yet sweet and true,
 (Where taste has done what taste can do;)
 But of his pipe so vain withal,
 That, faith, he never sings at all:
 Poor gentleman he's moved with wonder
 That folks should think *he'd* act Leander,†
 Give him, of Righi or of Braham,
 The parts, perhaps he'll deign to play 'em;
Then,

* Phillips has some merit as a singer;—his voice is, however, better adapted to a room, than to a theatre—and to the accompaniment of a forte-piano, than to that of an orchestra—but he is, I am informed, so intolerably vain, that it is sometimes difficult to induce him to play. Singers have ever been remarked for their capriciousness, but even he whom Horace ridicules for that folly, did not, as would seem, presume to carry it farther than his own private circle.

“Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus, *inter amicos*
 “Ut nunquam inducant animum cantare rogati.”
 Tigellius would never, I dare swear, disappoint the *public*.

† Mr. Phillips is reported to have refused the part of Leander in the Padlock, as below his mark; and still more wonderful to relate, they had no one to supply his place, Mr. Phillips being the only professed singer at present on the Irish stage, except Messrs. Coyne and Lindsay, who, I suppose, declined the character also. I should have been much pleased to have seen either of those latter gentlemen attempt it, “it would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever.”

Then, careless of the crowd he's tiring,
 But self applauding, self admiring,
 With labouring chest and straining throat,
 He'll seem to heave the nauseous note,
 And in *cadenze* and divisions,
 Throw up his vocal evomitions.

Be not, *sweet sir, so wonderous vain,
 Tho' heav'n bestow'd the vocal strain,
 All, but yourself, can see you're curs'd,
 To speak, to look, to act, the worst.

D 2

* At present I shall say no more of this muscadin-songster
 —but

Habeo alia multa quæ nunc condonabitur
 Quæ præferentur post, *si perget lædere.*

I now fear Mr. Phillips's vanity is incorrigible, I am sure it has become intolerable, and this is really to be lamented, as his "organe," as the French call it, is very good, and as he is the only male singer at present engaged at Crow-street, where nevertheless they *do* operas every week.

FIFTH EPISTLE.



Tota armenta sequuntur.

ÆN. I.

WHAT man, what lady shall we sing?
To whom now touch the pipe, or string?
Whose name shall Crow-street echoes greet?
Whose praise shall Temple-lane repeat?
Whence blocks and brutes from ev'ry nook,
Follow their Orpheus, Mr. Cooke.*

Begin, and thro' the anxious throng,
Let *each* be honour'd with a song;
See with what emulative fear
They press to meet my eye or ear,

“ 'Twere

* This inchoation I have translated from Horace, (Lib. I. Carm. 12.) who himself borrowed it from Pindar's 2d Olymp. The learned reader who consults the originals will indeed find, not Crow-street, Temple-lane, and Mr. Thomas Cooke, but Pindus, Pisa and Orpheus; for my familiar adaptation, however, I am in hopes I shall not be entirely condemn'd; in one point of view, at least, I am justified in calling Mr. Cooke Orpheus; all the world knows what kind of audiences they were, that followed and admired that prince of fiddlers.

Saxa ferasque lyrâ movit *Rhodopei*us Orpheus.
Talia et, Orpheu *Hibernice*, mota tuâ!

“ ’Twere better” hark, their gen’ral call—
 “ Be damn’d than mention’d not at all.”

Come then, lead on the rear-guard, Fullam,*
 Who with deputed truncheon rule ’em :
 And tho’ the buffo of the band,
 Tower the second in command.
 (Thus as old comedies record,†
 Christophero Sly became a lord.)—

Cheer up! nor look so plaguy sour,
 I own your merit, feel your power ;
 And from my prudent lips shall flow
 Words as light as flakes of snow :‡
 For should I vex you, well you might
 Repay’t, by playing ev’ry night ;
 And furnish’d with most potent engines,
Gubbins or *Scrub*,—take ample vengeance.

But truce with giting, let’s be fair—
 Fullam’s a very pleasant player ;
 In knavish craft, and testy age,||
 Sly mirth, and impotence of rage ;

He’s

* Fullam is the acting manager, and we are not therefore to be surprised at finding his own characters in the front of every bill ; it is natural, and I should be well content, but that with an unhappy, tho’ not uncommon fatality, his favourite parts are those which he plays *worst* ;—His *Scrub* is execrable, and his *Gubbins* very indifferent.

† Induction to the Taming of a Shrew.

‡ Επεα νιφιδεσσιν ὁμοκότα χειμερινῶν.

IL. III.

|| Vivaces agit violentus iras.

SENEC. H. F.

He's still, tho' often harsh and mean,
The evenest actor of our scene.

Enough;—fair Kniveton* now to you
The poet's critic song is due;
Mild and attractive—nature's mould
Ne'er form'd thee for the loud and bold—
To rule with haughty Margaret's air,
To shriek Alicia's mad despair,
To pour with Constance, hatred's flood,
Or grasp the dagger steep'd in blood.
It *mean'd* thee for the gentler parts
Of moisten'd eyes, and melting hearts;
The humble† sympathetic friend,
Prompt to weep—to bear—to bend,
The duteous child, submissive wife,
And all the softer shades of life.
But sad reverse—the face and form
Which *art* might animate and warm,
You clearly shew in every part,
Have never known the care of art.
And thus the choicest gifts are lost,
‡Torpor your calm,—your mildness frost;

Unmov'd

* Kniveton. This lady has some neglected capabilities about her, but she is one of the most inanimate actresses I have ever seen.

† In *heroic soubrettes*, the Annas, the Cleones, and the Cephisas, Mrs. Kniveton might be very respectable. We could wish to see her name substituted in general for that of Mrs. Chalmers, who is by no means fit *even* for the parts she plays.

‡ It is very agreeable to me to be able to say, that in some passages of the character of Amelrosa, Mrs. Kniveton was, in exception to herself, animated and affecting.

Unmov'd you smile,—untouch'd you weep,—
Your voice a dream—your silence sleep.

Hargrave* the modest and the meek,
With humble blushes clothes his cheek;
Seems scarcely bold enough to raise
His eyes, indifferent of praise,
And with demeanour mildly proud,
Retires in silence from the crowd.
'To him, indeed, one vainly looks
For Kemble's rival, or for Cooke's,
Yet oft he glads the critic eyes
With gleams from talent's purest skies;
And draws the tear, and melts the heart
By careless strokes of happiest art;
Oh! *si sic omnia*,—but alas!
Those gleams like winter's sunshine pass;
He seems to think a smiling face
And upright posture a disgrace,
And therefore labours to present
His visage cross, his body bent—
As if his sense perceived around,
Unsavoury smell, or dismal sound,
And thus we're left to wonder still
Who plays so well, should play so ill.

What

* I was much perplexed in forming an opinion of Mr. Hargrave's dramatic merit, as he is, really, one of the most uneven actors I have ever seen. Had his *private* character been the subject of consideration, I should not have hesitated a moment to say, that it is one of the most respectable I have heard of.

What fair ones next advance in rank?
 Davis* plump, and Stuart lank—
 O'er Davis, let us draw the veil,
 Nor touch, e'er wounds have time to heal.
 Let, undisturb'd by satire, flow,
 The sacred stream of private woe,
 Nor mortal hand to touch presume
 The widow weeping o'er the tomb.

Poor Stuart† too, has claims for grace;
 Inveterate wedlock in her face,

D 3

Pleads

* Davis. I had much to say of this lady, but at this moment praise would be lost to her, and censure would be cruel.—

The time which has elapsed since the first note was written might perhaps authorize a little explanation at present, but I am *charitable*, and shall say nothing.

† This little woman, under the name of Miss Griffiths, played for some time with considerable applause, for which she was indebted principally to a lively manner, and a pretty shape—

*Sed longum forma percurrens iter
 Deperdit aliquid semper, et fulget minus
 Nec illa Venus est.*

HER. OET.

Her beauty (if it can be so called) is common to our eyes, and worn so threadbare, that it no longer covers her multitude of sins; and her liveliness she has completely lost with her *pucelage*—far be it from me, to guess whence the alteration proceeds; but it is visible, and really afflicting.

She was a tolerable Ariel, and was admired in some other light characters—but at this moment she is fit for nothing, but bearing Juliet's or Ophelia's pall.

Pleads with more eloquence for pity
 Than all the preachers of the city : *
 Poor girl ! *sufficient* torments tease you,
 I will not blame, and cannot praise you.—

What dreadful sounds assail my ear,
 Are all the coffin-makers here ?
 Do creaking cars bear grumbling swine ?
 Does grating F——† fright the nine ?
 Cooke‡ play eight instruments together,
 Or croaking frogs foretell wet weather ?

Or

* *Melius Chrysippo et Crantore, dicit.*

† For this gentleman's appearance on this stage, he has to thank his own and Mr. T. Cooke's indiscretion—they will understand me—if they should not, Mr. Galindo may assist their memories.

This person is heroically indignant, at my not liking his verses ! *Que je suis à plaindre !* I must not only read bad productions, but must praise them also.—But that cannot be ; I too have an unlucky disposition to represent *things as they are* ; and I must therefore repeat, that I think this agreeable writer's verses are even worse than his friend's music. But why should he complain ? I dislike *his* verses—he abuses *mine* ;—are we not even ?

‡ The *never-sufficiently-to-be-extolled* fiddler whom I have so often mentioned.—In quality of drum-major or master of the band to the merchant's corps of volunteers, Mr. Tom Cooke wears two most costly epaulettes, to the great inconvenience of the sentinels and others of his Majesty's troops, who are harassed with presenting arms and making other salutations to the aforesaid Tom, as to a field officer. I should advise Captain Stanley to regulate *this* matter for *decency's* sake ; and I would hint to him that for *economy's* sake, he might turn away all the band except the master, who can him-
 self

Or is it Lindsay's* Irish howl?
 Or solemn Coyne's pedantic growl?
 'Tis both—in dismal chaunt they join,
 And Lindsay's echo'd back by Coyne.
 So at the morning's early hours,
 One jack-ass tries his tuneful powers;
 And quick another's dismal throat
 Brays dreadful a responsive note,
 It roars thro' cow-house, barn and sty,
 Horseponds and ditches loud reply;
 The pigs, affrighted, scamper wild,
 And †the vex'd mother whips her child.

Good :

self play upon *eight* instruments *together*, which is quite enough; and, as I am giving advice, I should also wish that Mr. Tom Cooke would not make a practice (as they say) of retiring at the end of the fourth act of the play, and abandoning the ballet and farces to the guidance of his underlings.

* Lindsay.—This person is the *only* actor of Irish characters now on the Irish stage, and the last we had was a *Welshman*. This is one of our practical bulls.—Lindsay is, however, not only the Denis Bulgruddery, and the Sir Lucius O'Trigger of Dublin, but, is also, *poor man!* one of our principal vocal performers. Mr. Coyne enacts the dignified and elegant Sir Philip Blandford, and the plain Steadfast, and even sometimes the mad Octavian; but he nevertheless condescends to officiate, “invito Apolline,” as one of the *tuneful train*. To both these gentlemen, we may, without exaggeration, apply the ancient epigram,

Νυκτικώραξ ἄδει θανατηφορον, ἀλλ' ὅταν ἄσπ
 Δημίφιλος, θνησκει κ' αὐτὸς νυκτικώραξ.

Ανθολ. Δεστ. XXV.

† Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectora natos.

In

Good folks, I owe you no ill will;
 Be Blandford, or O'Trigger still,
 Act as you like, or right or wrong,
 But ne'er again attempt a *song*.

But see where little Howels* stands,
 And waves her supplicating hands,
 She fears again to be forgotten,
 And prays, most humbly, to be brought in;
 Whate'er folks say, the Bard has bowels,
 And grants thy wishes, gentle Howels.

Lost in these humble ranks sonorous,
 That swell a Covent-Garden chorus,
 Thy thrilling voice, thy wond'rous taste,
 Thy beauteous person—all were waste;
 'Till knowing Jones's generous care
 Taught you to breathe Hibernian air;
 And bade you lead the vocal throng,
 Unrival'd queen of Irish song.

Thus the poor wench, who t'other day
 Swept out her father's floor of clay,

Is

In Ireland, the custom, in cases of vexation and terror, is different from that of the Romans, as those who know any thing of the Irish cottager's manners can testify. I hope I have, however, preserved the *spirit* of the famous passage I allude to.

* This young lady was omitted in the first edition; whether she will be satisfied with the mention made of her, I cannot say.—To characterize that, which had no character, was impossible;

Is now, by fortune's whim, an't please you,
 *La Principessa di Borghese.

Is there no follower of Russel,
 No friend to democratic bustle,
 No writer of the Northern Star,
 No poet of †Marengo's war,
 No rival of O'Quigly's fame,
 No hater of the regal name,
 To free the drama from a thing
 So useless and so dull as KING?‡

And*

possible; and to give force and variety to what is neither impressive or versatile, is beyond my powers.

* The sister of the renowned Corsican, who now trembles on the throne of France, becoming, by the lucky death of a rapacious husband, the mistress of a large fortune, she thought she could not lay it out to greater advantage, than in getting a little *quality* into her family; and she accordingly *bought* herself a husband in Il generose ed eccellentissimo Principe di Borghese.

† I am, at last, by great diligence of research, enabled to say, that, of the battle of Marengo, the words were by F——, the music by Cooke, the action by Galindo.—*Triformis Chimæra!!*

‡ Horace's jest is much to the same purpose:

—— Per magnos, Brute, deos te
 Oro, qui Reges consuësti tollere, cur non
 Hunc Regem jugulas? operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est.

And now comes every nameless name,
 The Public torture and the shame,
 Who, nightly, as the curtains rise,
 Offend our ears, and scare our eyes;
 Kings, footmen, senators and hags,
 In ermine, livery, or rags.
 Thick, in terrific groupes, they mix,
 Like ghosts upon the banks of Styx;*
 But so self-satisfied, 'tis plain
 That they inflict, not suffer pain :
 Low and conceited, pert and dull,
 Each empty brain, and leaden scull,
 Each cross-made shape, and gorgon face,
 Lays claims to beauty, sense, and grace;—
 Claims let them make—th' indignant muse.
 Stoops not t' admit them, or refuse;
 She gives them neither praise or blame,†
 And to the *moon*‡ consigns each name,
 (Where connoisseurs collections show
 Of all that's lost on earth below;)

There;

* Huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat,
 Matres atq; viri, *defunctaque corpora vitâ*
 Magnanimûm heroum, pueri, innuptæque puellæ.

ÆN. VI.

The resemblance lies, not in their numbers or appearances alone, but in the "*defuncta corpora vitâ*" also.

† ——— Questo misero modo
 Tèngon l'anime triste di coloro
 Che visser senza infamia e senza lodo.

DANT. INTERN. C. III.

‡ Vide ORL. FURIOS.

'There, in dark cases, let them sit,
With O's* skill, and V's wit,
D's virtue,—A's youth,
S's good temper,—D's truth,
P's pity,—M's pence,
R's time,—and T's sense.

* Whether these letters be initial or final, whether they signify names, or indeed whether they mean any thing, I must be excused from disclosing.

If they have no signification, why should I betray my own nonsense? and, if they be typical, it belongs to the Public to make the application.

The editors of a contemptible monthly pamphlet, called Ireland's Looking Glass, or some such thing, have had the audacity to publish a list of most respectable names, of which, *they say*, these letters are the initials; to this assertion I have but one answer to make, *it is false*—that these letters have a meaning I confess, but I do not believe that any one has yet perfectly discovered it.

SIXTH EPISTLE.



Εγὼ μὲν δὴ οἶμαι ἅπερ υπεθέμεν ἀπειργάσθαι—εἰ δέ τις τανάν-
τῖα ἐμοὶ γινώσκει τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἐπισκοπῶν, εὖρησει αὐτὰ μαρ-
τυρῶντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις.

XENOPH. CYR. Lib. VIII.

GOOD natur'd muse, that from the sky
Breathe on encomiastic Pye,
And deck his periodic lays
With honey'd trope and flowery phrase;
Deign, on your suppliant bard, to shower
The gentlest influence of your power,
And teach my voice to celebrate
The glories of the Thespian state; -
* 'Tis my last work—my last request,
This labour o'er, from verse I rest—
Besides my lays to Jones belong,
What muse to Jones denies a song?

She

* Extremum hunc Arethusa mihi concede laborem,
Pauca meo Gallo—
——neget quis carmina Gallo.

She hears me not—in vain I pray,
 Fair Eulogy is far away,
 Teaching young Preachers* to disclose .
 The beauties of poetic prose ;
 And guiding laureate bards to try
 Flights of prosaic poetry.

But lo ! uncall'd, from routs and drums
 Dame Censure to my closet comes ;
 Of journals floats her patchwork gown,
 Post, Courier, Chronicle and Sun,
 And, to supply the 'kerchief's ends,
 A *Cobbett* from her side depends ;
 Instead of *attar*, round her head
 Steams of *tea* their incense shed—
 Her ears two figur'd serpents deck,
 And beads of *black-beans* twine her neck,

Wreath'd

* This is not a random rhyme. I exceedingly lament the foolish and indecent style of oratory, which so often makes the sacred chair, the “ tinsel throne of glittering nonsense ;” the serious disposition of thought, which our admirable church-service is so calculated to inspire, is either put to shame or to flight, by the wild and figured declamation, which, as a critic, I despise, and as a Christian detest. I would recommend it to those reverend young Poets, to indulge their taste for the Muses, in reading Cowper's description of a *petit maitre clergyman*, and to recollect the advice of Boileau :

Et, fabuleux chrétiens, n'allons point, dans nos songes,
 Du Dieu de vérité faire un Dieu de mensonges.

To some Readers, this note would require an apology ; such Readers I have no desire to please, and shall make none.

Wreath'd o'er her forehead nettles nod,
 In place of fan, a wormwood rod
 She bears; and, hanging from her breast,
 Churchill in miniature express'd.

"Write on," she cries, "obey my power;
 "These are my subjects, this my hour:
 "And the wide empire of the nine
 "O'er bards, and plays, and players, is mine.

"Time was, that ignorance was thought,
 "In would-be wits, a kind of fault;
 "And 'twas suppos'd, to common sense
 "A critic should have some pretence;
 "That poets should, at least, proceed in
 "A course of spelling and of reading;
 "Nor was it deem'd superfluous quite,
 "'That writers should know how to write.

"How different are those golden times,
 "When every living creature rhymes,
 "And Phœbus pours a general ray
 "Of poetry, as well as day.
 "—When the street-walking muse of Snaggs*
 "Would tread the stage in brogues and rags,
 "—And,

* The well-bred and ingenious author of "The Irish Nieces," a comedy. As a specimen of his powers of versification, is it unfair to quote the two first lines of his prologue, which this Menander means for *rhyme*?

"The soul to virtue is by precept mov'd,
 "And, by example, loyal.—Public good."

I confess

“ —And, in a sable buckram dress’d,
 “ Creeps the Melpomene of West.*
 “ —When Joe’s† poetic streamlet flows,
 “ A boundary ditch ’twixt verse and prose,
 “ And

I confess that nothing can be more entertaining than Mr. Snagg’s accusation of “ ἀφιλόκαλια” against Mr. Jones, for not bringing forward this exquisite drama.

* I should most humbly advise parson West to employ his pen in the transcription of some of South’s, Tillotson’s, or even Blair’s Sermons, for the use of his parishioners. It would be, I venture to believe, a task more fitted to his profession as well as his talents, than writing blank prose, which he calls blank verse. He has an undoubted right to set *asleep* in church all persons whom he may find there; but this privilege should not be extended to the theatre. One at a time, Mr. West! if you please! How truly has Ovid described this great tragic parson, and his great comic rival, Mr. Snagg’s, by his

“ *Somni pingues—et frigidus humor.*”

AMOR. Lib. I.

† Lest my censure of this gentleman’s writing should be thought too severe, I subjoin the following sentence from one of the answers to the Familiar Epistles, which will shew us in what estimation his verses are held, even by his own party. “ Though personally unacquainted with this gentleman, I am happy to offer him a tribute (though trifling) of *that respect* to which his character so *fully* entitles him.—*He is not a good poet!*” (T. T. Convers. p. 39.) A tribute of respect with a vengeance. I wonder some other of his *respectful* defenders did not quote of *him* Voltaire’s character of Abbé de St. Pierre, whom, to say the truth, he much resembles. “ Il écrivait d’une manière a ne rendre person jaloux, son style n’a aucun agrément; il étoit peu lu: et ceux même qui le lisaient se *moquaient de lui*, et le traitaient de *bon-homme*.” It is but fair, however, to add, that the *author of the Thespiad* is of a widely different opinion,

" And to its sullen channel draws
 " From *this* side mud, from *that* side straws.
 " When ——— " much bemus'd in beer,"
 " Is songster, play-wright, pamphleteer—
 " Cerberean bard!* with triple strain,
 " He guards, by howling, Jones's reign,
 " Yet licks, like Pluto's dog, the feet
 " Of those that offer aught to eat.

" When B——† from his Blazing Star
 " Shakes folly, petulance and war,

" And

opinion, and launches out into the most enthusiastic praises of the goodness of Joe's HEAD and heart. This is a complete proof, that the *Joe* who wrote the *Thespiad* is not Joe A——, who, though he so violently applauded his *own* plays, yet is still too modest to print his own praises.

* " Cerberus hæc ingens latratu regna trifauci
 " Personat——cui vates——
 " Melle soporatam, et medicatis frugibus offam
 " Objicit, ille fame rabida tria guttura pandens,
 " Corripit objectam," &c. &c. ÆN. VI. 420.

† This person is really one (if I may be permitted to pun upon the brewing trade) of the "*genus vatum*," which is much more than, without a pun, I could venture to say of the author of the *Blazing Star*, and the sixth number of the *Philanthropist*; a periodical paper, which, to the great amazement of the whole town, and the great mortification of the printer, Mr. Parry, dragged out its existence *even* to the seventh number. If this same B——, as I have heard, be the author of the *Theatrical Tears*, though I shall confess him to be on a *level* with the rest of the learned clerks who sing Mr. Jones's responses, I must assert that, in this work, he is vastly *above himself*. I would, nevertheless, advise Mr. Jones, and the players, not to employ him

“ And as his blundering jests miscarry,
 “ With loss of *change* perplexes Parry.*

“ Or yet when he from Alma’s bowers,
 “ Sheds tears in such infectious showers,
 “ As pitying taste and sense must weep
 “ To read, and sobbing sink to sleep.
 “ Go on! sweet youth!† if heav’n allows
 “ Thy length’ning life to bless our vows,
 “ Perhaps the wond’ring world shall see,
 “ A new J—— A—— in thee.”

“ Of yore, too, there were bounds between
 “ The tragic and the comic scene;
 “ And play’rs, which ever they embrac’d,
 “ Still kept the unities‡ of taste.

“ Smirking

him again, and to remember, if they can, the words of
 Homer, which Nerva uttered in his last moments to Trajan.

“ Τίσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σῶσις βελεσσι.”

His *Tears* might indeed bring down my arrows, and

“ Quicquid delirat—plectuntur Achivi.”

* “ ——That from its horrid hair
 “ Shakes pestilence and war——
 “ And with the fear of change
 “ Perplexes monarchs.——”

† “ ——Puer! si quæ fata aspera rumpas,
 “ Tu Marcellus cris.”——

VIRG.

‡ Since the days of the universal Garrick, every stroller
 thinks he can play every thing; tragedy, comedy, farce, and
 pantomime.

" Smirking features—tripping gait
 " Ne'er troubled the severer state;
 " Nor hollow voice, nor formal stalk
 " E'er trespass'd on the comic walk,
 " Each kept its humour and its place,
 " Peculiar gait, and natural face.
 " But now confounded, melted, mix'd,
 " No frontier barrier betwixt,
 " Our actors different changes try,
 " The * tragic grin, the comic cry.
 " Each face so sever'd into halves,
 " That one side weeps while t'other laughs:
 " Thus

pantomime. Actors seem now to think it quite disgraceful to be excellent in one line alone:

" The mouse that is content with one poor hole,
 " Can never be a mouse of any soul."

* In this respect the audience frequently imitates them—I have seldom seen more merry faces than at a German tragedy—a German tragedy, is a kind of "Tragedy for warm weather," and a German comedy also approaches so nearly to the standard of that celebrated piece, that there is no longer any distinction between the species of the drama: to the modern, we may apply what Tacitus says of the ancient Germans, "*Genus spectaculorum unum et in omni cœtu idem.*"—I can easily imagine, that many a German Dramatist has completed his piece, before he resolves whether it should be a Tragedy or Comedy. These gentlemen seem to possess the power, that Mercury, in Plautus, humorously ascribes to himself, when he observed the Spectators vexed (as modern Audiences often are) at finding that their *comedy* was in truth a *tragedy*.—

Quid contraxistis frontem? quia tragœdiam
 Dixi futuram hanc, *Deus sum*, commutavero
 Eandem hanc si voltis ex tragœdiâ
 Comœdiam—— PROL. in Amphitruonem.

" Thus Irish weddings oft display
 " Mix'd scenes of frolic and of fray;
 " And at their funerals and wakes,
 " Close by the coffin laughter shakes.
 " Or, as was seen in *Egypt's feasts,
 " A Skeleton t' amuse the guests,
 " Upon whose front appear'd a label,
 " Death's near, be merry while you're able.—
 " —Hence † Shakespeare's uncongenial reign,
 " Our scenic democrats disdain,
 " From Rowe and Congreve turn, and wooe,
 " Reynolds thy chains, or thine Kotzebue, ‡
 " And

* Mos olim, et miserè epulis spectacula dira.

SIL. ITAL.

He who may seek amusement at our theatre will, I fear, often have reason to fancy himself at the Egyptian banquet—for though his entertainment will be, in some respects, tolerable, he may be certain of seeing and hearing, ever and anon, one or other of those terrific objects, who like the skeleton, attempt to excite *pleasure* by expressions the most dreary, and appearances the most hideous; but in these cases, he must even make up his mind, as the proverb goes "comer del pan que el diablo amasa;" for it seems all complaint is *vain*, unless it is very *public*, and (as some folks would have us think) *dangerous* unless very *private*. I am of the *former* opinion; the *latter* is not worth thinking of.

† I am glad to see that Shakespeare seems to be coming into fashion again at Crow-street; for this, to do him justice, I fancy we are to thank Mr. Holman.—"Macte in illâ virtute."

‡ Whenever it shall please his great and good friends, the potentates of Germany, to send the excellent Kotzebue to the world of spirits, I make no doubt that Shakespeare will address

" And for the finer walks unfit
 " Of genuine tenderness and wit,
 " They in such dramas hope to tower,
 " As suit their heteroclite power.
 " —In *tragedies** that offer ranting
 " For spirit, and for pathos canting,
 " Blustering for sorrow, oaths for sighs,
 " For vigour, rage and blasphemies:

E

" Where

dress him, as Menander did Philemon.—Of the fame of Menander no person is ignorant, and if we may judge of his works by the imitations which we have of them, his great reputation was not above his merits. Of Philemon, the Kotzebue of his day, we only know, that he was the rival and conqueror of Menander, who, with the amiable frankness and honest confidence of genius, asked his successful competitor—"Quæso, " Philemo, bonâ veniâ, dic mihi, quum me vincis non erubescis!—"

A. G. Noct. Att. XVII. c. 4.

* "Audiences are now drawn together by the translated trash of some foreign novelty—they wait the appearance of a ghost or a goblin; they hope to be roused from their weary lethargy, into hysterical laughter, or hysterical tears, by the *farcical* or the *horrid*—they swallow with gaping wonder, the eccentric flights, the profane rants, the illuminated morality, the bombastic diction of imported patchwork from their German favourites."—Preston's *Reflec. on the Germ. Style*, p. 59. Every one, who is acquainted with German literature, well knows, that not one of their dramas (*Germania quos horrida parturit Fætus*) deserves to be excepted from this general censure. The English reader I refer to *all* the plays of Schiller and Kotzebue, which have been translated into our language. He will not find one piece undisgraced by vice or folly: some, indeed, excel in folly, others in vice, but in general "they are as like one another as halfpence, each seeming monstrous 'til its fellow come to match it."—As YOU LIKE IT.

" Where passions either creep or fly,
 " Meanly low, or madly high,
 " And *bedlam nature* stalks* or flutters
 " Either on stilts or in the gutters.—
 " In *comedies*, where pun and hit
 " Supply the scarcity of wit,

" (As

* What would Longinus have thought of such passion and sublimity as the following passages (taken at random from Schiller) exhibit:

" Now let the storm rage, tho' it should swell me up to the throat."—ROBBERS.

" O. Moor. I am no spirit—but living as thou art—oh! life of wretchedness.

" Y. Moor. What, wast thou not buried?

" O. Moor. That is, a dead hound lies in the grave of my father."—ROBBERS.

" All-judging God! do as thou wilt—sacrifice this young person; that your devils may shout for joy, and your good angels abandon you:—"

CABAL AND LOVE.

" What, talk you of nobility in Genoa? (*indignantly*) let them all throw their ancestry and honours into the scale, and one hair from the white beard of my old uncle shall make it kick the beam."

FIESCO.

Of these effusions, for the faithful translation of which I am accountable, Longinus would say, as he does of those of the *water-poet* of his day, ποιητῷ τινος, τῷ ὅτι, ἔχει νῆφοντός ἑσι. Sec. xxxii. or he would have referred them *ζακχαιᾷ τινι τῶν λογῶν*, to a certain drunkenness of expression, which was sometimes objected even to Plato.

" (As in a famine folks must eat
 " Bread made of beans instead of wheat,) "
 " And all the incident consists
 " In active heels,* and brawny fists,
 " Where polish'd heroes nothing say
 " But,† " *Zounds, keep moving, what's to pay?*" "
 " And for his plot the Author trusts
 " To mending coats,‡ and breaking busts.—
 " In *operas*,|| where lovers come
 " To dulcet sound of bass and drum,

" And

* " The public appetite began to be sated with nonsense, which now required to be reinforced with practical jokes, and corporal activity."—PRESTON'S REFLEC. p. 65.

† These are specimens of the phraseology of our new comic school, taken from "*A Cure for the Heart-ache*," and some other farrago of folly, of which I happily forget every thing but the cant word that I have quoted.

‡ On the important incidents of a tailor's mending his own coat, and a sharper breaking a cracked china figure, two modern pieces entirely turn.

|| Here let me say a word or two on the state of our 'corps d'opera' (*opera inanis!*). The *three* female singers, Misses Howells and Davidson, and Mrs. Stewart, are on every account incapable of playing even secondary parts, and indeed seem to me to be only fit to lengthen the procession in Alphonso, or swell the choruses of the Castle Spectre. We have no professed male singer but Mr. Phillips, and thus the *whole* of our musical department depends on his slender pipe. Now as it happens that, from some cause or other, this gentleman cannot conveniently play all the parts, both male and female, of an opera, on one night, it is evident that it were unreasonable to expect any musical entertainment at the Dublin theatre. But that

we

“ And damsels thrill their tender lay to
 “ Trombone and trumpet obligato,

“ Where

we should not have to complain of a *total* want of this species of amusement, recourse has been had to a most brilliant expedient, which, for its singular ingenuity, I shall relate in detail : Some one had heard, that a distressed country company had once played Hamlet with the omission of Hamlet's character, and it therefore occurred to him, that a *musical* entertainment, with the *music omitted*, would be, in the present posture of affairs, the most satisfactory extrication which could be devised. —The scheme was, it seems, adopted, and the Battle of Hexham had the honour to be selected for the experiment. The aforesaid Misses H. and D. were to sing all the choruses, and Mr. Phillips's name appeared in the front of the bills as principal in the glees. Night after night did Mr. Phillips's non-appearance disappoint the weary audiences, till at last Messrs. Jeffery and Dyke, who usually enact waiters, senators, and such folk, kindly consented to make themselves ridiculous, by singing the first and bass parts, in such time and tune as it should please God. So far all was prosperous. But here another *unforeseen* accident occurred, for it was by some means or other discovered, that the *first* and *third* would be useless without a *second*. Necessity, says the proverb, is the mother of invention, and necessity took a violoncello-teacher, dressed him in a fine brown jerkin, equipped him, by the assistance of a burned cork, with most terrific moustachios, and finally turned him out upon the stage a finished *second*, in whom nothing was forgotten or omitted, but a *voice* to sing—and after *this manner* the *musical* drama of the Battle of Hexham was said and sung by his Majesty's servants!!! “ *ex uno disce omnes.*”

I find, from the admonitions of the *Kitchen-stuff* Gazette, that I have been, in the foregoing note, guilty of a most wicked and diabolical mistake, by inserting the name of Mr. Dyke instead of that of Mr. Denman, who really sang the third, and who, to use *Taratalla's* own words, “ is one of the best and most scientific *BASS singers* living, on or off the stage.”—“ O

Terque

" Where harmony's accordant choir
 " Is lost in crash of wood and wire,
 " And he o'er all his peers is proudest,
 " Who roars the longest and the loudest."*

" Such are your poets, players, and plays;
 " The joy and wonder of our days;

E 3

" Hail !

Terque quaterque beatus !" I am '*au desespoir*' at the disgrace
 into which this error has thrown me; Dyke or Denman, Den-
 man or Dyke, I beg pardon of either, of both, or neither of
 the gentleman, as they please; I have an *equal* respect for
 each, and, though I have not the happiness of their acquaint-
 ance, they are, I am ready to believe,

————— " Arcades ambo
 " Et cantare pares," —————

while *Mistyllus* and *Taratalla* are the "*respondere parati*."

* Pausanias, in his account of the Cadmean family, (Bœt.
 c. 5,) says, that *Harmony* was the daughter of *Mars* and *Venus*.
 Could I suspect any of our composers of being '*litterulis græcis*
imbutus,' I should guess that, from this passage, he derived the
 notion of accompanying love-songs with horns, triangles, ket-
 tle-drums, and other martial instruments—so that now-a-days

De nos orchestres, l'harmonie
 N'est que du bruit et du fracas;
 Pour peindre la mélancholie
 On offre le bruit des combats;
 Pour peindre la paix, l'innocence,
 On prend trombonne et clarione;
 Pour accompagner la romance,
 Bientot on prendra du canon !!!—

MARANEL.

" Hail ! * happy plays, and poets, and play'rs,
 " † Of Jones's praise triumphant heirs,
 " In whom his accurate discerning
 " Beholds *all* genius, wit and learning—
 " Thus, my Lord Peter, ‡ it is said,
 " Saw all things in a loaf of bread,
 " And, wisely arguing every cut on,
 " Prov'd it veal, ven'son, beef and mutton."

" If Jones Lord *Peter's* whim pursue
 " The town with || *Martin's* eye will view,
 " Nor

* " Hail, Bards triumphant, born in happier days,
 " Immortal heirs of universal praise." POPE.

† Mr. Jones is accustomed in every company, where he finds an opportunity, to descant on the merit of his theatre, &c. &c. in a set formula of speech, not unlike that in which the ingenious Mr. Jenkinson used to lecture, concerning " The Cosmogony, or creation of the world," &c. &c.—the usual topics of Mr. Jones's orations are, Mrs. Jordan,—and how, about a dozen years ago, she set out from Dublin, on a low-backed car, with a young child in her arms;—Mr. Phillips, and his engagement at Covent Garden, and the future fame of the aforesaid Phillips,—master Betty, and the crowds he brings in London, and the empty benches to which he played here,—and the stupidity and bad taste of Dublin audiences, in respect of the premises, and on all other occasions; together with sundry shrewd hints of his own well-deserving, and certain sly cuts at the total ignorance of *Greek*, which is visible throughout every page of the Familiar Epistles.

‡ " Bread," says Lord Peter, " is the staff of life, in which is contained, *inclusivé*, the quintessence of mutton, beef, veal, venison, &c. &c."

TALE OF A TUB, Sect. 4.

|| Martin, as my readers know, was of an opinion in some degree

“ Nor will it, at his mental treat,
 “ Believe that *crusts* are *wine* and *meat*.”

“ Let him not, vainly, hope to ride
 “ In safety, o’er the Public tide,
 “ To buffet every gale that blows,
 “ And sweep the sea of all his foes,
 “ While in his puny fleet* are reckon’d
 “ First-rates none, but one o’ th’ second,

“ And

degree varying from that of his brother; he indeed is reported to have thought, that a loaf was neither more nor less than a loaf.—Poor man!!!

* The following specimen of a theatrical Lloyd’s List, will give a tolerable recapitulation of my opinions of the Crow-street company :

Moor’s-head, Jan. 23, 1804.

“ Admiral Jones, in spite of the very hard weather, still continues to keep his station off the Bagnio slip. If the Peter-street squadron should attempt to put to sea, we are confident the gallant admiral will give a good account of them. His force is as follows :

Ships.	Guns.	Commanders.
Montague,	74	Talbot.
Veteran,	55	Hitchcock (Mrs.)
Charon,	44	Vice Ad. Fullam.
Assurance,	44	R. Jones.
Gorgon,	44	Galindo (Mrs.)
L’Entreprenante,	44	Walstein.
Le Modeste,	38	Hargrave.
Alligator,	36	Williams.
Tartar,	32	Williams (Mrs.)
Fairy,	16	Stewart (Mrs.)
Bittern,	16	Lindsay.
Borer,	12	Coyne.

Remains in port, La Musette (en flûte) Phillips.”

“ We

“ And all the rest—his bold defenders,
 “ Are frigates, luggers, hulks, and tenders.”

“ Nor think because the Thespian realm,
 “ Of which he holds the guiding helm,
 “ Bows at his feet, obeys his nod,
 “ And owns great Psapho* is a God;
 “ That all mankind to think must cease,
 “ Slaves to his pleasure or caprice.”

“ Nor, shou’d he please to entertain
 “ A score of dunces in his train,
 “ By ev’ry Grub-street art to drown,
 “ The voice and wishes of the town,
 “ That, ev’ry pen to write must cease,
 “ Save at his pleasure or caprice.

“ No! no! Were every journal bought,
 “ To hum to sleep the public thought;
 “ Some eye will wake to watch his course,
 “ Some tongue, which neither *fraud* nor *force*,
 “ Can

“ We are sorry to observe, that the *Favourite*—Creswell—
 “ and the *Insolent*—Stewart, have *parted company* in the late
 “ breezes”—

Tantâ mole viri turrilis puppibus instant!!!

If the foregoing scale be correct, he has none either of the first or second rates, and but one of the third.

* Psapho, as Ælian tells us, was a Libyan, to whom the savages of Africa paid divine honours, because he taught certain birds to sing “ Psapho is a God.”

“ Can lull, shall roll the critic storm,
 “ And thunder in his ears “ REFORM.”

She said and vanished,—thro’ my room,
 Vapours arose of acrid fume.—
 Thus when a ghost his mission ends,
 And thro’ the yawning trap descends,
 The yawning trap in clouds expires,
 Sulphureous smell of brimstone fires.

Dear Jones, I’m glad the beldame’s fled,
 Rest she for ever with the dead;
 Ne’er may her features, sour and cramp,
 * ‘ Visit the glimpses of our lamp,
 Making night hideous;’ ne’er again,
 With bitter taunt and cynic mien,
 May she invade the sacred bound
 That fences bards and players round;

But let us lay this worse than ghost,
 And send her to the red-sea coast,
 In the due forms of magic† school,
 And exorcise the fiend by rule.

First

* Revisit’st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous.

HAMLET.

† The anxiety which so many persons exhibited for the discovery of my name, surprised me at first; but I now find, many of them did so out of mere orthodoxy, and in obedience to the “ editto del. S. officio,” an extract of which I shall add as a specimen of the enlightened liberality of the year 1802.

“ Tutte

First let us grasp with daring hand,*
 Th' Avonian talismanic wand,
 And summon here, on their allegiance,
 The powers that pay to it obedience;—
 Hecate† dark, and Ariel ‡ light,
 And merry Robin,§ sportive sprite;
 Titania,|| Oberon and all
 That hear the Fairy monarch's call,
 Theirs be the region of the airs
 And constant watch etherial, theirs.

Then

“ Tutte persone così ecclesiastiche come secolare, debbono rivelare e notificare tutti e ciascuno de' quelli de' quali sappono e abbiano avuto o avranno notizia, che si siano ingeriti o s'ingeriscano in far esperimenti de negromanzia, o di qualsivoglia altra sorte di magia!!! ”

Dat. Dal S. Ufficio di Pizaro questo de 26 Aprile 1802.

Should not one think, that 1802 was put, by an error of the Press, for 1302 ?

Sebastian Michaelis was not much madder than “ S. Tomaso Francisco Roncalli, maestro di S. Teologia ” the author, or rather the editor of this liberal proclamation, in the nineteenth century—poor human nature !

* The learned Reader will perceive some incongruities in this exorcism, *que je me garderai bien d'annoncer aux ignorans.*

† Macbeth.

‡ Tempest.

§ Midsum. Nigh^t's Dream.

|| A procession of priests chaunting high mass, is sometimes of wonderful efficacy against ghosts and goblins, who, whatever profession they might have followed when alive, have,

Then comes the ministerial train*
 Chaunting the Muses' sacred strain,
 In robes of ceremony drest,
 With sacerdotal stole and vest,
 Each Actor holding Shakespeare's page,
 The *priests* and rubrick of the stage.
 Such as our Thespian faith requires,
 Not begging monks and wandering friars.

Then in a burning chauldron's blaze,†
 Throw Reynolds's and Morton's plays,
 Each page of Allingham's and Cobbe's,
 And heavy Boaden's clumsy jobs;
 Cherry's‡ sad mess of mirth and moans,
 Insipid hash of Murphy's bones.

The

have, after their corporeal death, as great an aversion to high mass and all Church ceremonies, as any Calvinist in Scotland.

* Midsum. Night's Dream.

† Les exorcistes imposèrent silence aux diables; on jetta dans le feu *les pactes* les uns après les autres. Hist. du procès d'Urb. Grand. This liberal and enlightened operation was performed in presence of some of the chief men of the Church and of the Law, in the year 1631, in the now atheist land of France.

‡ I very much prefer even Reynolds to Mr. Cherry; the former is original, and an oddity; the latter mawkish, and an imitator; nor can I guess for what merit his piece was transplanted from London to our stage, unless that, which the Spaniards say of wives, be true of the Soldier's daughter, "que con los *dados* se tomavan—contando los *dineros* que *trahen*,

The insane verse and madder prose
 Of Lewis, Coleman's puppet-shows—
 And all the trash the Germans send here
 Thro' Thomson, Noeden, Plumtree, Render,
 Be all on the buzaglo plac'd,
Pacts with the demon of false taste.

Next gather in a chrystal bowl,*
 The tears down Pity's cheeks that roll,
 That from the riven bosom flow,
 Touch'd by the wand of tragic woe;
 Scatter the blessed drops around,
 And sanctify the holy ground;
 No envious fiends their footsteps set
 On earth that Pity's tear has wet.

'Tis done—the solemn rites are paid,
 And Censure's in the ocean laid.

And now, from fair Augusta's towers
 Collect, dear Jones, your scenic powers;

Not

"*trahen*, y no considerando las virtudes, que tienen,"—and in respect even of "los dinaros," I fancy the *fingers* of Mr. Jones's advisers did not judge correctly. It was proposed by Jack Tradesall, in the Flapper, to *act a sermon* at the Private Theatre; this undoubtedly gave Mr. Cherry the idea of the *homily* which Ferret preaches towards the end of this play. But did this most reverend author and actor never hear of Horace's opinion—"neque si quis scribat sermoni *propiora*, putes hunc esse Poetam."

* Of the supposed effects of *lustration* no one can be ignorant—*I hope ours is conducted dans les formes.*

Not mere allies* that play a score
 Of nights, "and then are heard no more,"
 That for a moment shine, and then
 To darkness give us up again;
 Not mummers fit to please the gallery,
 Collected at a five pound† salary;—
 Not *Poucets* to say parts by rote,—
 Not singers who can't sing a note.
 Drive from your stage all foreign nonsense,
 And shows‡ that only please at one sense—

F

Trash

* I had rather never see a good actor on our stage than see him only for a few nights, which only serve to throw the rest of the season in a deeper shade—

Et obtentâ densantur nocte tenebræ.

Nor should it be forgotten, that these strangers are birds of prey as well as of passage.

† Imperavit (Marcus Antoninus) etiam *scenicas* donationes, jubens ut *quinos aureos* scenici acciperent. JUL. CAP. in Vit. M. A. Mr. Jones, in this point, imitates the Roman Emperor with a scrupulous accuracy, as he never gives a higher salary than 5*l.* per week. In London they give 10*l.* 15*l.* and 20*l.*—Surely it would be (as tradesmen say) *worth his while* to give two or three good actors here, as much as they get elsewhere.

‡ I am not one of those rigid fanatics who dislike all kinds of childish gaiety, and therefore, I say nothing about Mr. Jones's *Ballets* and the four interesting little girls that *try* to dance in them. I own I should be better pleased that the stage was not made absolutely a dancing *school*, and a place of *practice* for embryo Parisots; but as the children are always neatly dressed and generally contrive to keep time, in the present state of the scenic art, we have no reason to complain.

Let

Trash that usurps the comic name,
 Mad farce, and maudlin melodrame.
 Throw off the trammels of the mode,
 A shifting yet a pond'rous load;
 Nor let your native sense and taste
 By others' follies be disgraced,
 Catch timid merit as it springs,
 Give to your lib'ral soul* full wings,
 The stage's golden age restore,
 And Censure shall return no more.†

Let me add a strange anecdote which I have heard, though I can hardly believe:—A person with a very good sounding honest *Irish* name, something like M'Donough, or M'Swiney, or O'Flanagan, was desirous of *setting up* in this city as a dancing master, and obtaining an engagement as ballet dancer at the Theatre—"What with *such* a name? impossible! my good friend, go, go and get *another*."—The Milesian was wise enough to take the hint, and Signor (I shall not mention his new appellation) afterwards danced '*mutato nomine*' with great success at Crow-street, and now teaches, as I am told, in the highest circles in Dublin.

* Mr. Jones's liberality is a favourite topic of expatiation amongst his friends, and I believe not unjustly; but I entreat him to exercise it in procuring a few good Players for the Theatre Royal; an expedient of generosity which he has not yet practised to any considerable extent.

† Gentle Reader, who hast travelled these *six* heavy stages through with me, accept my thanks for the patience, with which you have borne the roughness of the road, and the mistakes and wanderings of our course, "beggar that I am, I am poor even in thanks," and have no other reward to offer, than, that I assure you, I shall not again, if I can avoid it, trespass on your kindness and good nature—*valete*, and, if you can, *plaudite*.



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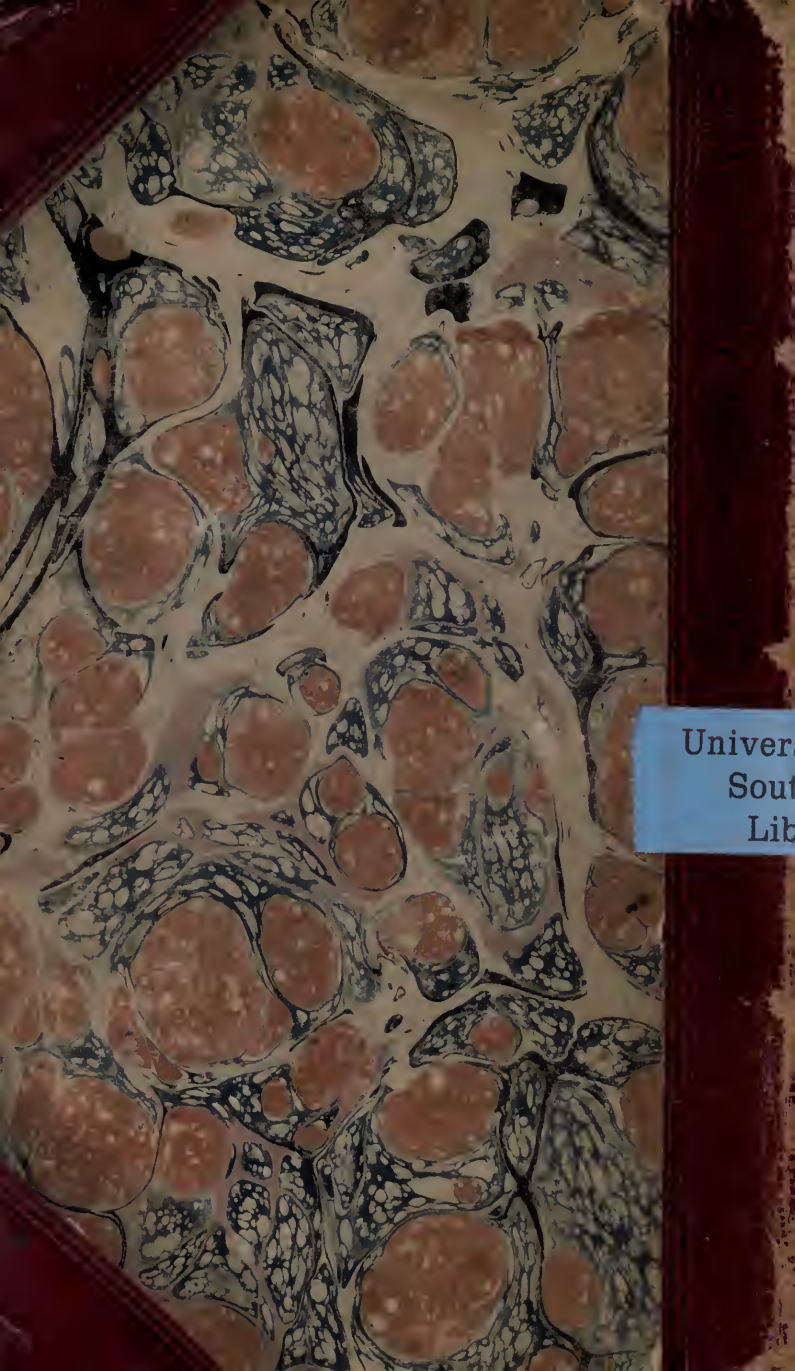
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